
ശ്രേയസ്

# Paramabhattaraka Sree Vidyadhiraja Chattambi Swamikal

(The Hermit and Social Reformer)

Dr. A. BALAKRISHNAN NAIR

# Paramabhattaraka
# Sree Vidyadhiraja Chattambi Swamikal

(The Hermit and Social Reformer)

*Dedicated to*

**Jagadguru**
**Swamy Satyananda Saraswathy**
**Tiruvadigal**

# PARAMABHATTARAKA
# SREE VIDYADHIRAJA CHATTAMBI SWAMIKAL
## (The Hermit and Social Reformer)

**Dr. A. BALAKRISHNAN NAIR**
*Professor and Head of the Department of Politics (Rtd)*
*University College, Thiruvananthapuram*

**INDIRA PUBLICATIONS**
Indira Bhavan, Kannammoola
Medical College P.O., Thiruvananthapuram - 695 011

**BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR**

**Parliamentary Control over Administration**
*[A study in Procedure] (Research Study)*
**The Facets of Indian Defence**
**The Government and Politics of Kerala**
*(Research Study)*
**Landmarks in the Administration of Kerala**
**Sree Ramante Punchiri** *(Malayalam)*
**Reflections on Hinduism** *(Trans)*
**The Divine Smile of Sree Rama** *(Trans)*
**The Relevance of the Presidential System in India**

**Paramabhattaraka Sree Vidyadhiraja Chattambi Swamikal**

First Published in India, 2001



Price Rs. **50/-**

*Published by :*

Indira Publications, Indira Bhavan, Kannammoola, Medical College P.O., Thiruvananthapuram - 695 011

*Printed at :*

GEO Printers, Plamood, Trivandrum - 4. Ph : 314218, 315878

# PREFACE

Spiritualism and hermitage constitute the foundation of 'Bharateeya' culture and civilisation. The great sages of 'Bharata' in their ecstatic consciousness have set the precepts and way of life to be adhered to by the whole of mankind for enriching their economic life and putting them on the road to salvation. In the 19th Century Kerala witnessed a fall in social morality and also acceptance of evil social practices in the name of progressivism. The stage was thus set for the incarnation of Chattambi Swamikal. The exclamation of 'Are you a Vidyadhi Raja! (King among scholars) made regarding Swamikal was quite true in every sense of the term though it explained only a microscopic part of his attainments. Chattambi Swamikal was an 'Athivarnasrami' clad in white dress for whom the purple robes was a superfluity. He enjoyed eternal bliss even while living and moving as an ordinary person since he was a 'Jeevan Mukta' (liberated soul). Swamikal followed the 'Suka Marga' to bypass the intermediary stages leading to 'Nirvikalpa Samadhi'. The Theerthapada Sampradaya established by him is a harmonious blending of the 'Advaita method of Sankaracharya and the 'Siddhanta' method followed by Dravida Saints like Augustia. The dire need for Hindu unity felt to day was realised by Swamikal a century back and he worked hard to weld Hindu society into one unit and purify it by the removal of evil and meaningless social practices. Sacrifice and munificence are the marks of hermitage. Chattambi Swamikal followed these precepts in his life and observed that service to mankind is the most commendable act. He

was, in fact, the personification of love, compassion and knowledge. By activating the lethargic Kerala Society he laid the foundation of modern Kerala and has become a pioneer in the field of social reform

This book has been written with two important and legitimate purposes. No book written in the English language on Chattambi Swamikal has so far come to my notice. The life and teachings of Swamikal can be for the benefit also of those who do not know the Malayalam language only if they are described in the English language which is a widely spoken language in the world. The second purpose is to state what Swamikal himself has said instead of the author waxing eloquent about the life and attainments of the great sage. The present author has contributed only the first chapter describing briefly the Divine life and the Seventh chapter indicating Swamikal's basic social reform work. A humble attempt has been made in the other chapters to reproduce briefly and in a simple manner what Swamikal himself has written.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Poojappura Krishnan Nair who has gone through the section on Linguistic thoughts and the Chapter on Advaita Vedanta and made the necessary corrections. The encouragement given by Prof. T. P. Sankaran Kutty Nair for writing this book deserves mention here. This work is placed at the lotus feet of Jagadguru Swamy Satyananda Saraswathy Tiruvadigal to whom it is dedicated also.

Thiruvananthapuram **Dr. A. Balakrishnan Nair**
02-04-2001



*Narayana Guru Swamikal*  *Chattambi Swamikal*  *Thirthapada Swamikal*



*Swamy Satyananda Saraswathy*

# CONTENTS

**Chapters**

## CHAPTER I

# The Divine Life

Sree Vidyadhiraja Chattambi Swamikal was born in a place called Kollur (Kannammoola) in the city of Thiruvananthapuram on the Bharani Star day of 'Chingam' in the year 1029 of Malayalam Era (25 August, 1853 A.D.) He came to be known as Kunjan though his parents named him as Ayyappan. Since he belonged to a poverty - stricken family Kunjan did not get regular education in his early boyhood. The poverty of the family was heart-rending to Kunjan who even offered his food to the other children. As a solution to the abject poverty of the family Kunjan used to collect flowers for the Kollur temple and spend the money that he received on getting food for the family. He even undertook physical labour in the construction of the Secretariat building in Thiruvananthapuram. Even at the age of thirteen Kunjan showed unbelievable kindness to living beings. He used to throw into the pond the fish caught by other children. His dislike of fish food became so great that he did not like fisherwomen coming to his house. When Kunjan showed aversion for fish food in a mischievous manner his mother did beat him up with a long fish instead of a rod. The mark left by this stroke remained on his back till the end of his life.

Kunjan listened at a distance to the teaching of Sanskrit by a Scholar to the Brahmin boys of the Namboodiri House of Kollur as his family could not afford to send him to a regular school. What he learned he repeated at a solitary place and mastered it. Kunjan was noticed by the teacher only after about an year. The intellectual brilliance of Kunjan was recognised by the teacher who accepted him also as a student. Within a short time Kunjan mastered many works in Sanskrit. When Kunjan was only thirteen years old he used to meditate in front of the Kollur Devi Temple. An "Avadhoota" (wandering hermit) who happene

see this realised that the boy possessed the power of concentration of mind. He asked the boy to follow him and both of them reached a desolate place. The 'Avadhoota' conveyed a celestical message (Bala Subramonya Mantra) to him before leaving the place. This message as told by Swamikal himself to his followers was later responsible for making him the master of all arts and branches of knowledge. The 'Bala Subramonya Mantra' was later taught to his disciples Neelakanta Thirthapadar and Thirthapada Paramahamsa. As his thirst for knowledge could not be quenched by the learning of Sanskrit alone Kunjan joined the school conducted at Pettah (a place near Kollur) by Raman Pillai Asan[1]. The quietness and thoroughness with which Kunjan mastered the different subjects of study earned for him the post of 'Chattambi' (Monitor) in the school. His disappearance from the school at night made his co-students and even the teacher suspect his morality. When he was pursued it was found to the surprise of all that he was making his way towards the Devi Temple at Pettah for meditating in a secluded place. Kunjan used to learn 'Mantras' and 'Thantras' by hearing their recitation by the young members of the 'Matom'. He also used to solve mathematical problems with ease and perfection. His print-like hand-writing pleased all people and taking this into account he was assigned clerical worth at the Kollur Matom[2]. At Pettah Kunjan established a school for teaching wrestling to his Ezhava friends. Under the direction of Kunjan his associate Velutheri Kesavan Vaidyan took up the challenge of a Punjabi wrestler and defeated him in the presence of His Highness the Ruler of Travancore. Several young men came to this institution to undergo training under Kunjan Chattambi who had learned from Tamil treatises the crucial nerve centres of the human body.

1. Raman Pillai Asan in his book 'Chattambi Swamikal' admits that he is not certain what Kunjan had learned from him except that he used to borrow books like 'Kaivallya Navaneetham'. Kunjan used to attract audience for hearing his recitation of Ezhuthachchan's 'Ramayana', 'Bharatam', etc.
2. This work was later given up as it did not satisfy him.

In order to earn livelihood for his poor family Kunjan Pillai left the school of Raman Pillai Asan and joined his brother's work of writing out documents for registration in the Neyyattinkara ( a place about 18 kilometers south of Thiruvananthapuram) office of Registry. The Inspector of Registration was so impressed by the legible handwriting of Kunjan Pillai that he issued orders for giving him eight 'Chakrams'[3] every day irrespective of the quantity of work done. But, Kunjan Pillai used to work hard and share the proceeds of his work with his co-workers who were not getting enough money. After a few months of work at Neyyattinkara he moved to Bhuthapandy along with his brother. Here also the work was document writing. As the climate of Bhuthapandy was unbearable to him Kunjan Pillai returned to Neyyattinkara and after a short while reached Thiruvananthapuram. The association of Kunjan Pillai with people of low caste, his practise of wrestling, learning of Music, Meditation, search for scholars of Vedanta, etc were disliked by the members of his family. At the instance of his mother Kunjan Pillai again took up job and became advocate's clerk. By virtue of his mastery over mathematics he was later appointed as clerk in the Huzur office. When Sir T. Madhava Rao who constructed the present Secretariat building of Thiruvananthapuram was the Diwan of Travancore it was decided to appoint a new accountant. The applicants were given a test in Arithmetic to be answered and brought the next day. When all the applicants answered the questions in the same manner the Diwan, on enquiry, understood that Kunjan Pillai had helped them. On the orders of the Diwan Kunjan Pillai was produced before him. For a very tough question in Arithmetic Kunjan Pillai gave the answer in a few seconds' time by counting his fingers. He was appointed as accountant. when he was denied a day's leave by his superior officer Kunjan Pillai, in a cavalier manner left the job.

3. The value of one chakram was 1/28th of a Travancore Rupee

Kunjan Pillai actively participated in the organisation called Jnana Prajagaram which was functioning under the patronage of Raman Pillai Asan (ME 1051). At the meetings of this association professor Sundaram Pillai used to be present from whom Kunjan Pillai learned western philosophy. From Thaickat Ayyavu Kunjan Pillai learned Vedanta lessons contained in Tamil treatises. In addition to this he learned from the Scholar Swaminatha Desikan (who was on the staff of the Maharaja's College, Thiruvananthapuram) Tamil Vedic treatises and grammar. Thaickat Ayyavu used to speak at this conference on 'Hata Yoga' which Kunjan Pillai had occasion to learn. Ayyavu knew the art of making copper into gold by using certain green leaves. When pressurised to collect those leaves Kunjan Pillai gave a golden ring as offering to the 'guru' and left him for ever. Another scholar whom Kunjan Pillai met was Subba Jadapadi who came from Tamil Nadu to Thiruvananthapuram as royal guest to take part in the Navaratri festival (the worship of Saraswathy the goddess of learning). As directed by Jadapadigal Kunjan Pillai (who was a youth 23 years old at this time) accompanied him to Kallada Kurichi in Tamil Nadu. After remaining with Jadapadigal for four years and taking part in the usual discussions at his residence Kunjan Pillai conducted a South Indian tour. At the residence of Jadapadigal he learned 'Manthras', 'Vedas', 'Upanishads' and rhetoric and became well-versed in the Advaita Phiosophy of Sree Sankaracharya. During this period he learned the 'Siddhanta Sampradaya' followed exclusively by Dravida Saints like Augustiar. Kunjan Pillai combined the 'Arya' and 'Dravida' paths followed for self-realisation. The new method introduced by him is a blending of the 'Advaita' method of Sree Sankaracharya and the 'Siddhanta' method of Dravida Yogis and came to be known as the 'thirthapada Sampradaya'. This method was first taught to Sree Narayana Guru and later to Sree Neelakanta Thirthapadar and Thirthapada Paramahamsar. In 1056 (M.E) Kunjan Pillai took leave of Jadapadigal and travelled in places like Thevakkotta and Koilpatti and learned further about the Dravida culture. He also

learned English and Anatomy. Kunjan Pillai became a disciple of a Muslim Maulavi and learned Khuran from him. He also acquired deep and comprehensive knowledge of Christianity. He could speak authoritatively on any subject. While living outside Kerala he accepted the name of Shanmughadasan. He returned to Kerala at the age of 28 through Malabar and visited several sacred places.

During his south Indian tour Kunjan Pillai had transformed himself into a great scholar and ascetic. There was no branch of knowledge and fine art in which he had not established his mastery. At the Maruthua Mountain cave Chattambi Swamikal practised penance (topas) for a few months. On a later occasion he had visited this cave along with Nanu Guru Swamikal. On his return to Thiruvananthapuram Swamikal met with Kumara Velu who was known as Atmananda Swamikal and learned from him more about the practise of Yoga and Marma Sastra. The urge for the acquisition of more and more knowledge induced Swamikal to get into the library of a Namboodiri family (Koopakkara Matom) in Trivandrum and remain there for three days. No non-brahmin was usually given permission to use the library. The exceedingly short time during which Swamikal had mastered the contents of the books made the head of the Namboodiri family exclaim that he was a 'Vidyadhiraja' (one who has mastered the realm of knowledge). While staying at Kalluveedu in Thiruvananthapuram Swamikal visited places like Nedumangad and Vamanapuram. At this time the demise of Swamikal's mother took place. He reached the mother's house and after performing the obseques left the house once and for all. Swamikal prepared again for undertaking a tour since he felt that the knowledge acquired by him was not complete. He went to the cave at Maruthua Mountain where he had practised penance earlier. After meditating at the cave for a few days he continued his tour in Southern Travancore. At vadaveeswaram (near Nagercoil) Swamikal found a vagabond sharing the refuse of a dinner with stray dogs. In the vagabond all

the signs of an 'Avadhoota' were clearly seen. When he realised that he was being noticed by Chattambi Swamikal the Avadhoota began to walk briskly and later began to run. Swamikal pursued him and both of them reached the valley of a hill where the Avadhoota told at the ears of the former the upadesa (celestial message). Chattambi Swamikal prostrated at the feet of the 'Guru' and received his blessings. He became the 'liberated' and attained self realisation.

Chattambi Swamikal did not insist that all his disciples should become ascetics. He gave advice to every one who desired it according to their need in life and mental advancement. He had three chief disciples - Sree Narayana Guru, Sree Neelakanta Thirthapadar and Sree Thirthapada Paramahamsar. Narayana Guru known in his younger days as Nanu was born on 20th August, 1856. He was in search of a Guru and desired to live as an ascetic. He came to know that Chattambi Swamikal had reached the Aniyoor Devi Temple (Near Thiruvananthapuram) and met him along with the latter's friend Kodiparambil Narayana Pillai. Nanu Asan, as Chattambi Swamikal used to call him, was accepted and blessed as the first disciple. For nearly forty one years the two saints moved together. The disciple was taught the Bala Subramonya Mantra, Yoga practices, Khecheri Mundra and such other things. In the preface to 'Devarcha Padhati' (written by Neelakanta Thirthapadar) Chattambi Swamikal has mentioned Nanu Guru Swamy as his first disciple. There is overwhelming evidence to establish that Sree Narayana Guru was the disciple of Chattambi Swamikal[4]. Since it will serve no purpose to bring out the comparative greatness of either of them a deep analysis of the evidence is unnecessary.

Being convinced of the purity of Narayana Guru he was accepted as disciple by Chattambi Swamikal who blessed him by giving him 'Brahmopadesa' (Sacred advice for attaining salvation). The 'Bala Subramonya' Mantra was advised to Narayana

Guru by Chattambi Swamikal most probably at 'Aruvippuram' (a place south of Trivandrum) where the consecration of Siva was performed by the former later in 1096 (M.E.). Sree Neelakanta thirthapadar the disciple of Swamikal attained 'Samadhi' (Celestial death) at Karunagappally. Swamikal reached Karunagappally and performed consecration at the place of the Samadhi[5]. Swamikal is justified in writing an analysis of Christianity. Near the 'Ettumanoor' temple the Christian missionaries, in the course of a religious conference, ridiculed Hinduism to an inexorable extent and addressed Hindus as 'Sinners'. The book of Swamikal and the speeches of his lieutenants arrested, to a large extent, the proselytisation of ignorant and poor Hindus to Christianity[6]. As a result of the efforts of Thekkinedathu Raman Pillai Swamikal got 80 acres of land at Malayattoor. A hutment put up there has become the Ezhumattoor Ashram of the present day. During the stay at this place the 60th birthday of Chattambi Swamikal was celebrated on the initiative of his disciples and followers.

In the year 1922 Swamikal happened to meet Kumbalathu Sanku Pillai for the first time in the residence of Amabalpuzha Krishna Pillai. In the following year swamikal reached the Kumbalathu House and stayed there for two months during which the place of Samadhi in a nearby 'Kavu' (a comparatively small

---

4. Dr. K. Balarama Panicker categorically states that Chattambi Swamikal who took Narayana Guru to Thaickott Ayyavu and explained Yogas to him cannot be called by any name other than 'guru'. (Article in Chattambi Swamy Smaraka Grantham, P. 225). He quotes as evidence the 'Nava Manjari' as well as the stanzas written by Sri Narayana Guru himself on the occasion of the 'Mahasamadhi' of Chattambi Swamikal to prove this fact. The use of the words 'Sad Guru' (ideal guru) in these stanzas has been considered by Dr. Panicker as referring only to Chattambi Swamikal.

   Dr. Nataraja Guru states that he had heard Sree Narayana Guru referring to Chattambi Swamikal as his 'Guru'. (Dr. Nataraja Guru 'The Word of the Guru, PP. 258-90)

5. This was perhaps the only consecration performed by Swamikal

6. The Travancore Census Report (1941)

area of dense forest where divinity is attributed to 'Cobra King' and worshipped) was selected. Swamikal returned to Trivandrum and stayed there for ten months. When he fell ill he took medicines only to satisfy his physician disciples. Swamikal told them that he was reluctant to come again in this world and desired to complete his 'Karma'. He also gave an indication that the time had come for throwing away his physical body. Swamikal asked Sankhu Pillai to come to Trivandrum and take him to Padmana. While bidding farewell to Trivandrum Swamikal told the 'Yogini' (female sanyasin) of the Kulathoor monastery that he was on his 'voyage'. The real implication of this pronouncement was understood only by the 'Yogini'. When Narayana Guru came to see him Swamikal expressed displeasure at the collection of money in which the 'Guru' was engaged in at that time. When the destined day approached Swamikal expressed desire to have a shed in the 'Kavu' located earlier. On the fourth of May (Karthika Star), 1924 at 3 p.m. he expressed desire to sit up and himself assumed the 'Padmasana' Posture. Exactly at 4 p.m. Chattambi Swamikal attained salvation and became one with the 'Infinite'. On the next day the rituals connected with the 'Mahasamadhi' were performed. The present padmana Ashram is situated there.

## CHAPTER II

# Historicity of Kerala and Linguistic Thoughts.

### A. HISTORICITY

Chattambi Swamikal delves into the historical origin of Kerala in his book 'Pracheena Malayalam'.[1] The inquiry is based on scientism, logical argument and history. The book refutes the contents of the Semi-historical works 'Sahyadri Khandum', 'Kerala Mahatmyam', 'Keralolpathi' and 'Kerala Avakasakramom' which maintain that Parasurama gave Kerala as gift to Brahmins in order to wash away his sin of killing Kshatriyas. As Parasurama killed the Kshatriyas for washing away the sin of killing his mother he cannot be considered to have possessed sin later.[2] Since he had the power of 'tapas' (Penance) parasurama cannot be considered a sinner and evidently only one having the power of tapas can order the sea to recede. Significantly, there was no cause which compelled parasurama to give alms for washing away sin and getting, purified. Further, the 'Sahyadri Khandum', 'Keralolpathi' and 'Kerala Mahatmyam' which are the foundation on which the Parasurama episode has been constructed contradict each other in describing the sequence of events. Swamikal establishes that Parasurama did not bring Malayala Bharmins to Kerala. If the Brahmins had experienced downgrading as a sequel to receiving gift from Parasurama the latter who was making the gift must have been downgraded earlier. The Brahmins became downgraded as a result of receiving gift on the special prescription of Parasurama. Authoritative works, however, state that Parasurama had given gift only to the

1. Pracheena Malayalam was originally planned in six volumes of which only one is available.

2. The 'Kerala Avakasakrama' attributes traces of sin to Parasurama even after he had washed away all sin to the satisfaction of Viswamitra. This Malayalam work cannot have precedence over the original Sanskrit treatise.

deserving. When gift is received by the deserving sin of the gift-giver, naturally, is washed away. Since the Malayala Brahmins suffered degradation earlier Parasurama evidently, did not choose to bring them over to Kerala. The Kerala Mahatmyam (11th Chapter) itself states that those who were brought by Parasurama to Kerala were ideal persons.

Swamikal furnishes ample evidence to substantiate that Parasurama did not give Kerala as alms[3]. If Parasurama, as stated in the Kerala Mahatmyam, Kerala Avakasakramom and Jati Nirnayam, gave Kerala as alms to all of the 64 villages (which included all the Malayala Brahmans) the question arises why some of them alone have become downgraded. Since the Malayali Brahmins became downgraded as a result of receiving land as alms Parasurama could not have brought them from outside Kerala. Swamikal describes eight denominations of Brahmins, two downgraded denominations and twelve (Antarala ancillary denominations. The first place goes to 'Thamprakkal', the second to 'Addyas', etc. The eighth denomination has been described as sinners who had received land as alms. From this it is evident that they did not have the capacity to do their duty and those who are incapable of doing their duty are not the deserving ones for receiving alms. The reason for becoming downgraded must have been something else and not the mere fact of receiving land as alms from Parasurama. Swamikal questions the giving of land as alms becoming the reason for sin in Kerala alone when Parasurama had earlier given the whole of 'Bharata Kanda' as alms to Brahmins who, however, did not become sinners or downgraded. If Kerala was given as gift to all of the 64 villages all of them should have been jenmies. But there are innumerable Malayala Brahmin

3. Kunjan Pillai Chattambi, Pracheena Malayalam Vol. I published by N. Neelakanta Pillai, 1088 (Malayalam Era) PP. 32 - 55.

Swamikal establishes that Parasurama did not give land to all the 64 Brahmin villages. The sin that is associated with gift will go only to him who has received the gift.

families which do not have Jenmom rights. In the 'Sahyadri Khanda' there is no reference to gift. If this work had been composed in order to denigrade the Brahmins it can be said with equal relevance that 'Kerala Mahatmyam' and 'Keralolpathi' were composed to praise the Brahmins and denigrade the others. The master-servant relationship of Brahmins and Sudras is depicted only in the treatises written by Brahmins and is contrary to actual practice.

Quoting 'Sahyadri Khandam' Swamikal established that Kerala did not belong to Bhargava. When Bhargava was asked for land by the Brahmins he refused to give land and cursed them that they will become beggars everywhere. The Brahmins were relieved of the curse on their request and were ordered to proceed to 'Asiprastham'. From this it is evident that Malayala land did not belong to Parasurama.[4] Since these Brahmins came towards the south they must have reached Kerala. Malayadri Mahatmyam refers to the boundary of Malayalam as 'Kanjirottu Puzha' in the north, Kanyakumari in the south, the 'Malaya Mountain' in the east and sea in the west where the Naka lords reigned supreme. Evidently the land of Bhargava was to the north of Kanjirottu puzha. If the Malayalam land belonged to Bhargava the land records must have been in his name. If the argument is that the records were destroyed by the Nakas then they could have destroyed 'Kerala Mahatmyam' and other works which praise the Brahmins. The Nakas and Brahmins further lived cordially with the men folk of the latter having 'Sambandam' type of marriage with women of the former. If the lands of the Brahmin 'Jenmies' were forcibly taken over by Nakas (Nayars) the existence of 'Brahmaswom' (land owned by Brahmins) in the midst of land owned by Nakas (Nayars) is an inexplicable fact. If the Nayars had misappropriated the lands of the Brahmins the two communities would have been hostile to reach other. In some of the houses

4. Ibid; P. 56

of Nayar lords like 'Kaimal' and 'Panicker' women were given in 'Sambandam' only to Brahmins. No money was received from the Brahmins for any purpose since it was believed that it may ruin the family. Even the wicked among the Brahmins were highly respected.[5] In the fifth chapter of 'Pracheena Malayalam' Swamikal proves that the dominance of the Nayars was not the gift of either Parasurama or the Brahmins as has been described in the 'Kerala Mahatmyam'. It is pointed out that the Nayar lord occupied the highest and the most respected position (Agrasana) at the temple. The Nayar lord worships first at the time of festival in the temple during which he is received with respect by the Namboodiri. Only after that the Brahmins and others worshipped[6]. In connection with marriage in the Brahmin house 'tamboola' (symbol of respect) was given to the Nayar lord. The Brahmins who appeared for examination in 'Veda' were also examined by the Nayar lord by virtue of his status as the owner of the temple.

Since the gift of Kerala by Bhargava to Brahmins has been proved to be ficticious it is only simple logic to understand that the Nayars were the only owners of the whole land of Malayalam. Either the Nayars gave land to Brahmins or possibly the latter were an enlightened section of the former since the Malayala Brahmins are described as the Brahmins of Malayala Nadu. The word 'Malayala' belongs to the Malayalam language whereas 'Brahmana' belongs to the Sanskrit language. These two words have united to form 'Malayala Brahmin' on account of some necessity for it. Swamikal has established by depending on the evidence furnished by 'Kerala Mahatmyam' that a set of people physically strong, moral, brave and culturally accomplished lived in Kerala before the arrival of Brahmins. When the Brahmins came in large groups and behaved in an unbecoming manner the Nayars had to drive them out on several occasions. But these Brahmins continued to come to Kerala and by playing several tricks man-

5. Ibid; P. 67

6. Ibid; P. 71

aged to remain here and called themselves malayala Brahmins in order to ensure their nationality in Malayala land. The 'Sahyadri Khanda' states that the Brahmins, in course of time, took up the work of cooking and witchcraft and by setting one group of Nayars against another managed to lead a life of dependence on the Nayars. An old edition of 'Keralolpathi' categorically states that Malayala land came to exist when the sea receded. The Nayars were the people and lords who lived in the land close to the mountain before the sea receded. Refering to an old Vattezhuth treatise and poems composed by Naka Lords Swamikal evaluates the personality and life style of the Nakas. Though martial in spirit the Nayars were highly religious and maintained high standard of morality. On the basis of the evidence given above Swamikal exhorts the removal of the term 'Malayala Brahmins'. The accomplishment of Nayars is proved further by citing the works of foreigners. Shaik Sainuddin in his work 'Tufattul Mujahideen (translated into English by Rollandson and printed in London in 1833) states that if a Nayar lord is killed his followers will attack the country of the enemy and devastate it till their consternation subsides.[7] The skill of Nayars in the use of weapons has been established by Logan in his Manual and by Sir Hector Munro (British Commander). In the book written by Duart Barbosa describing the sea coast of Eastern Africa and Malabar also the Nayars have been described as the lords of the country who knew only the profession of fighting. The eleanliness of Nayars has been commended by Sir John Read.[8]

Having disproved the veracity of the term 'Malayala Brahmana' Chattambi Swamikal furnishes evidence to invalidate the description of Nayars as 'Sudras'. The Brahmins insinuatingly used the term 'Sudra' to mean Nayar in daily life as well as in the treatises written by them. The Nayars, in course of time, unwillingly ad-

7. Chattambi Swamikal, Pracheena Malayalam, Vol. I, (Published by Vidyadhiraja Parishad) P. 94.

8. Ibid; 100 - 101

mitted that they are 'Sudras' and began to describe themselves as such. Swamikal inquires whether the term 'Sudra' was associated with Nayars from the beginning or at a later time. There is reference in 'Kerala Mahatmyam' to Parasurama asking Devendra to give Deva women for the enjoyment of Brahmins. Devendra sent his son Jayantan's daughter 'Subhaga', gandharva's daughter 'Subha' and six other virgin girls as well as a Rakshasa woman. In addition to this Bhargava brought 'Dasis' (Temple dancing girls) and 'Dasas' (male servants) from outside Kerala. In this context as well as in Malayalam records and correspondence the name 'Sudra' is not anywhere found. Significantly, the Malayala army used to be called 'Nayar Army' and not 'Sudra Army'. The names of many places such as 'Pada Nayar Kulangara', 'Nayar Kulam', 'Irai Nayar Kulam', and 'Nayar Vakappadi', refer to Nayar and not Sudra. No body calls a Nayar 'Sudra come here' as we say 'Namboodiri come here' or 'Potti come here'. In the place of Namboodiri or Potti the words 'Nayar', 'Pillai', 'Kartha', 'Kaimal', 'Menon', etc. are used. The term Sudra is really found in Sanskrit works like 'Manusmriti', 'Chandogyopanishad', 'Brihadaranyopanishad' etc. and belongs to the Chaturvarnya system. Unfortunately, in the documents registered in the erstwhile princely state of Travancore alone since the year 1850 the term 'Sudra' has been used. The royal family of Travancore, as is widely believed, was very much under the influence of Tamil Brahmins who may have been responsible for using the word 'Sudra' to describe the Nayars. The ulterior purpose of the Tamil Brahmins in doing this was possibly their need to keep the proud and rich Nayar community away from the ruling dynasty. Thus it becomes evident that the term 'Sudra' was not used here in early days and that it does not agree with the philology of the Malayalam or Tamil language. The law dividing society into four classes in Kerala was not based on either 'nature' or 'work'. Contradicting the intention of the said law or its purpose the division of society into Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra was effected in accordance with the base appetite of man. It was governed by the

rule of earning one's bread at any cost. Out of superstition it was followed and this has imposed on Nayars the description as 'Sudra' which has eaten into the vitals of the Nayar community. Swamikal examines the division of society in Kerala on the basis of 'nature' and 'work' and considers that the only salvation of the Nayar community lies in coming out of the four-fold division of society.[9] The region extending from the Himalaya to Vindhya and lying between the two seas was inhabited by 'Aryas' and earned the name 'Aryavarthan', The other regions came to be known as 'Mlechcha Desam'. The Malayala land did not belong to this place where the Chaturvarnya system existed and therefore in this land the system did not exist. The 'Aryas' themselves in some of their treatises have given the Nayars a place above the 'Mlechchas'.

The term 'Varna' is common to all the four divisions of society. The Vishnu Purana describes the colour of the four divisions - The colour of 'Gorochana' (Kapila) for Brahmins, 'Arunam' (red without shining) for Kshatriya, Pitha (yellow) for Vaisya and Krishnam (dark colour) for Sudra. According to 'Brihadaranyopanishad' there was only one caste or varna at first. Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra were created only later. The 'Manusmriti' indicated that 'Chaturvarnyam' originated in 'Brahmavartta'. The statement in the Bhagavad gita 'Chaturvarnyam Maya Srustam' proves that it was created by god. The Gayatri tantram 'Varnasrama Vibhagachcha Tretayam Kritavan gives the clue that it was created in the Tretayuga evidently for the prosperity and continuance of the life of man. The question naturally arises why the division of society was not made in the 'Kritha' and 'Dwapara' Yugas. Chattampi Swamikal answers the question by pointing out that in the said Yugas 'dharma' prevailed and everyone did his duty unhampered by the others. But, in the Treta Yuga man began to resort to theft, cheating, etc and as a result complance with 'dharma' became less. All were Brahmins at first. Those who desired worldly pleasures and cov-

9. Ibid; P. 11

eted risky life became Kshatriyas. Similarly those who desired wealth became Vaisyas and those who resorted to immoral practices for acquiring wealth became Sudras. Thus everyone earned his Varna in accordance with his 'Karma' (work).[10] Chattampi Swamikal arrives at the conclusion that the people of Kerala whose moral life has been praised by 'Sankarasmriti' and 'Sahyadri Khandam' became downtrodden with the arrival of the Brahmins who were disowned by the land of their birth since they became heretics (Pashandamatikal). History abounds with such examples.[11]

**B. Linguistic Thoughts**

Sree Chattambi Swamikal begins the inquiry into the original language by the observation that every class of people has come to speak a particular language.[12] Whether these languages have originated in a particular language spoken in a certain area and later spread in different directions or they have originated in their respective places deserved consideration. This, Swamikal believed will demand a prior consideration of the origin of Man in this world. The question is whether human life began in a particular region of the world and branched off to other places or human life began in those regions of the world where Physiographical conditions became conducive for it. The historians argue that human life began somewhere in the world and if this is true an original language in the earliest period must have existed. When the human beings migrated to other places every migrant group must have brought about changes in the original language. The histo-

10. In one sense 'Sudra' is one who supports society or the feet in the case of the human body. Foot or 'Pada' has a serene meaning in Hindu Philosophy.

11. Ibid; P. 157

12. The linguistic thoughts of Chattampi Swamikal are found in his book 'Aadi Bhasha' originally written in Tamil and translated into Malayalam by Pannisseri Nanu Pillai. The book appeared in print only in 1998. (Chattambi Swamikal, Aadi Bhasha (Malayalam) (ed) Dr. K. Maheswaran Nair Swantham books (Trivandrum, 1998).

rians of the evolution of language have brought these different languages under two original languages - one is Sanskrit and the other is Tamil known otherwise as the 'Arya' language and the 'Dravida' language

When we begin to estimate a particular language our attention is first drawn to its science of Sound. When Sanskrit and Tamil are compared their first difference that becomes notable is that the words composed of Sanskrit script cannot be mostly pronounced by using Tamil letters. The 'Swara' or an articulation which can be sounded only with a vowel in Sanskrit has three magnitudes which are totally absent in Tamil. Other differences on the basis of letters are also pointed out by Swamikal who emphasizes that the logical movement of human life is from the condition of lack of civilization to one of civilization and not from the latter to the former. The beauty and prowess of certain Sanskrit words such as 'Mandaram' 'Mridulam', 'Kusumam', 'Gambheeram' and 'Bhringanadam' cannot be retained when they are used in their Tamil form. This fact is well known to all who know both the languages. In the offshoot languages of Tamil such as 'Kannada' and 'Telugu' Sanskrit letters have been mixed up as a result of the realisation of this truth. To those who have learned the Sanskrit language well it is not difficult to pronounce the Tamil letters. Those who understand the Tamil language alone are not able to pronounce easily some of the Sanskrit letters. The letters which can be pronounced only with great difficulty must have taken origin later than those which can be pronounced with less difficulty. In accordance with this reasoning Swamikal states that the Sanskrit script and Tamil letters remained together at one time and that the Tamils and the Sanskrit spoken people belonged to the same class. When they migrated to other places the sanskrit spoken people effected changes in their language and finally stabilised it as Sanskrit which means something that has been purified. The tamils were reluctant to amend their original language and letters and as such followed the Tamil grammar rules.

Swamikal points out that Sage Augustia and his disciples endeavoured to effect reforms in the tamil language on the basis of Sanskrit. It is also pointed out that Sanskrit is a language which has continuously adopted changes in its earlier form. The prakrit Sanskrit as substantiated by Chattambi Swamikal took shape after the origin of Tamil and earlier than that of Sanskrit.

Swamikal proceeds to substantiate his point of view that Tamil was the earliest language by an examination of conjunctions that connect sentences, clauses and words. Most of the conjunctions in Sanskrit and Tamil are found to be different though they occur when the 'Swaras' are joined with each other, when they are joined with 'Vyanjana' (consonant) and when 'Vyanjanas' are joined with each other. When an 'Akara' (the sound or the letter 'ah') is used after an 'Akara' in the Sanksrit language both of them get reduced and in their place a lengthy 'Akara' appears. For eg : 'Sundara' + 'Aravindam' = 'Sundararavindam'. The implication of such conjuctions will not be explicit when made out in the English language. After giving several examples to prove that the combination of 'Swaras' in Sanskrit and Tamil do not follow the same rules Swamikal arrives at the general conclusion that such combinations in Tamil do not toe the line of the Sanskrit language. This conclusion is applicable to the combination of 'Vyanjanas' also. Certain combinations of words not found in the other languages are found in Sanskrit and Tamil. This indicates an imperishable relationship between the two languages. Such similarity is possible even if it is not governed by grammar rules. Following the word combination rules introduced in the Sanskrit language the Tamil grammarians gave form to a certain system in the tamil language. Swamikal points out by giving examples that the tamil grammarians have not succeeded in their efforts as expected by them.

Swamikal examines the system regarding the composition of words in the Sanskrit and Tamil languages. He observes that in

Sanskrit Sounds have been divided into four kinds - 'Namam' (nown), Akhyatham (verb), Upasargam (Preposition) and Nipatham (a sound which has no Independent meaning and which shows the relation between words when added to them). Swamikal notes that in Tamil words have been classified broadly as 'Pakupadam' and 'Pakappadam'. The latter are those words which have come into use before the determination of their meaning. When such words are joined with plural and other participles they become 'Pakupadam'. 'Pakappada' are of four kinds - 'Perpakappadam', 'Vinaippakappadam', 'Edaippakappadam' and 'Urippakappadam'. In Sanskrit 'words' and 'sayings' have originated in verb root words. Those verb root words cannot be used unless they are combined with participles. Notably participles form a separate category in the Sanskrit language. But in the Tamil language the 'Vikuties' which remain in the place of Participles do not form a separate category. In Sanskrit a separate branch as pronoun is existing among the nown words which is absent in Tamil. After pointing out in an authoritative manner other differences also between the tamil and the Sanskrit languages Swamikal proceeds to examine the gender system in the two languages. In the natural sense the words indicating 'Man' are masculine, the words indicating 'Woman' are feminine and those indicating the non-moving belong to the neuter gender. But this system is irrelevant in the Sankrit language in which the gender system is applied even to the lifeless and non-movable objects. Swamikal pointed out that the Sanskrit poets have been mainly responsible for this as they found it convenient in their compositions. In Tamil the nown words belong to 'Uyartinachchollukal' and 'Arinachchollukal'. The Devas, human beings and 'Narakas' belong to the first category. The animals, birds and the lifeless and non-movables belong to the second category.

Chattambi Swamikal considers the grammatical system of Number in the Sanskrit and Tamil languages. In Sanskrit there are three numbers - referring to one, two and more than two. But

in the Tamil language there are the masculine participles such as 'An', Aan, 'Mn' and Man the feminine participles such as 'Al', Aal, and 'E', Common gender participles such a Ar and markal and the many gender participles such as 'tu' and 'Al'. Though there are differences in the Sanskrit language as in Tamil for referring to the 'singular' for referring to the plural number the participle 'Ah' alone becomes useful. Such differences exist between the two languages in the matter of 'Vibhakti' also. In Sanskrit there are seven 'Vibhakties' known as 'Pradhama', 'Dwiteeya', 'triteeya', 'chaturti', 'Panchamee', 'Shashtee' and 'Saptamee'. In the pradhama there is also a variation known as 'Sambodhana Pradhama'. In every vibhakti there are participles to indicate the number 'single', 'double' and 'many'. Thus in the Sanskrit language twenty one 'Vibhakti' participles exist. In the Tamil language also 'Vibhaktis' are eight in number. But, different participles do not exist in Tamil for indicating the number 'Single' and 'many'. More over in Tamil the participles indicating words are not recognised as 'Vibhakti' participles. In Sanskrit the seven 'Vibhaktis' have come to exist by virtue of difference in form and not on the basis of difference in their meaning. Swamikal examines also the 'root words' in Sanskrit and Tamil.

Chattambi Swamikal, on the basis of the foregoing analysis, arrives at the conclusion that Tamil has an independent origin and that it is not an offshoot of Sanskrit. The body of a language is the collection of words and the organs of a word are its letters. Anything pertains to nature in its origin and later adds to itself artificiality and assumes a civilised form. Any language that has thus letters devoid of artificiality may be considered the root of other languages. 'Word' in Tamil is known as 'Mozhi'. Such a word so closely pertaining to nature can be found only in Tamil and other languages aligned to it. 'Mozhi' expresses itself in the order of 'Akara', 'Ekara' and 'Ukara'. Our predecessors have not ordained any system without taking into account natural behavior and sustainable reason. Any noise or echo has its origin in

the ordinary person and more clearly in a newly born child. The child cries with the sound 'Ah', later looks at the face of others and laughs producing the sound 'Ee' and thirdly expresses fear with the Sound 'Woo'. Swamikal sustains that the earlier and natural form of the modern rich Tamil language is the 'Moola Dravida' or original Dravida language and emphatically affirms that the latter is the mother of the other languages.

## CHAPTER III

# Response to Brahmanism

The 'Vedadhikara Nirupanam' written by Chattambi Swamikal is an enquiry into the right of everyone to learn, preach and interpret the Vedas. The traditional custom laid down that only Brahmins by birth were entitled to have access to the Vedas. The other sections of the Hindu society did not fully enjoy this right. The lowest class by birth among the Hindu groups was completely debarred from even reading the Vedas. Quoting early authoritative texts and putting forward convincing arguments Swamikal establishes that everyone interested in the Vedas is entitled to read, preach and practise them. An examination of the authoritativeness of the Vedas is also undertaken to justify the natural right of everyone to have access to them.

Even those who argue that god does not exist do not strictly believe so and act accordingly. Among those who believe in the existence of god the 'Srauthas' consider Veda as God's gift to man for attaining salvation. They believe that Veda is called 'Sruti' as it has been heard directly from god even before the time of letters. To the 'Prapancha Vedees' the Veda is nothing but the Universe created by God, the protector. The relative position of the empirical self (Jivatma) and Universal being (paramatma) has been illuminated by the 'Prapancha Vedees'. Chattampi Swamikal lends his support to the 'Prapancha Vedees' in their contradiction of the Srauta point of view that Veda is creation of God[1]. Swamikal tenaciously questions the logical and moral basis of animal sacrifice. If the conduct of such sacrifice is the door to heaven what other base action is required to go to hell? It is solemnly affirmed

1. The reasons are that (a) what is given in the Vedas is the truth (b) there is no author for the Vedas (c) The Vedas are considered to be superior to the Ithihasas and Puranas. In the opinion of the prapancha Vedees everything contained in the Vedas is not true.

that Veda has been written by human beings who are praised by people as incarnation of god. It does not become a moral act even if a thousand Vedas give respectability to the coitus between the widow and 'Brahmachari' (one who observes celibacy) envisaged in the 'Poundareeka' sacrifice. The mention of such rituals which are there due perhaps to faulty interpretation should not be the ground for the total denunciation of the Vedas which are essentially virtuous.

Swamikal takes exception to the commentators' description of the Vedas as argumentative literature. Among the three bases of knowledge - direct knowledge, inference knowledge and knowledge acquired from the things told by others - direct knowledge is the ideal one. The Vedas belong to the third category. 'Brahmom' is written as 'Oam' which is the 'Vachchya' (revealed) form of 'Pranavam' (mystic spell). 'Oam' is inseparable from 'Brahmom'. The sound of 'Oam' is capable of protecting everything as is evident from the 'Gita', 'Upanishads' and 'srutis'. Thus 'veda' which has the form of 'Pranava' has no beginning or end. The 'Yagas' (sacrifices) prescribed in the Vedas are beneficial only temporarily whereas 'Oam' gives salvation. Recitation of 'Vedas' begin with 'Oam' and end also with 'Oam'. The 'Vedas' which include the 'Pranavom' (Oam) are above everything else. What can help us to understand the universal being is 'Veda'. Swamikal has adduced evidence to prove that the different parts of Vedas were composed by different persons in different periods of time. In chapter 14, skanda 9 of 'Bhagavatham' it has been stated that 'Pranavam' in the form of 'Oamkara' alone existed in the earlier days. The 'Chandogyopanishad' (7th chapter) refers to Sanal Kumaran teaching Narada only that part of Vedas which the latter had not studied. In the Advaita philosophy everything is illusion whereas in the other 'thatua sastras' everything is real[2].

2. Sree Chattampi Swamikal, Vedadhikara Niroopanam (Malayalam) Kerala Third edition, 1975 - PP 23- 24

The main theme of the book 'Vedadhikara Niroopanam' is that all Hindus are entitled to learn the Vedas. In order to perpetuate their supremacy in the Hindu hierarchy the Brahmins have prescribed that they alone had the divine right to learn and teach the Vedas. The Kshatriyas and Vaisyas were authorized to learn the Vedas without the right to teach them. The Sudras, the Brahmins declared, would be inviting the wrath of God if they choose even to read the Vedas. Swamikal explodes this baseless ordination by picking up suitable examples from the Hindu holy books themselves. The 'Brihadaranyopanishad' (Chapter II, Brahmana I) mentions the teaching of 'Brahma Vidya' by the Kshatrya king Ajata Satru to a Brahmin by name 'Gargu'. Similarly, the Kings Aswapathi (Chandogyopanishad, Chapter 5, Kandam 11) and Janaka (Mahopanishad, Chapter II) taught Brahma Vidya to Brahmins. The kings were so superior to the Brahmins in their knowledge of the Vedas that they could teach them even Brahma Vidya[3]. Suka Brahma Rishi who learned Brahma Vidya from King Janaka experienced permanent bliss (Brahmananda). By citing examples Chattambi Swamikal has established without doubt that the Sudra also could learn the Vedas. The 'Chandogyopanishad' (Chapter IV) mentions the story of Jnanasruti who begged the Brahmin 'Raiquan' to teach him the Vedas. The Brahmin who refused first agreed later to teach the Vedas when more wealth was promised and the disciples's daughter was also surrendered as present. Swamikal denounces the attempt made by Sutra Commentators to depict Jnanasruti as a kshatriya[4]. He refers to the story of 'Jabalan' approaching Gautama Maharshi for studying the Vedas. Gautama only asked his disciple to swear formally that he was not a Sudra. If Gautama was particular to test the caste of 'Jabala' he could have collected information regarding his disciple from other sources. From this it is evident that Gautama was not particular that a Sudra should not be taught the Vedas. Probably

3. Ibid, P. 29
4. Ibid, P. 39

Gautama desired merely to satisfy the fanaticism of other Brahmins. Further, in the commentary to the Sutra Sankaracharya lays down that the Upanayana ceremony (initiation into Brahminhood) need not necessarily precede the learning of the Vedas. Chattambi Swamigal quotes also how the river saraswati changed its course in order to provide drinking water to 'Kavasha', son of a temple dancing girl, when he was cursed by Rishis who were performing 'Yaga' (sacrifice) to die without drinking water. When blessed by the Devas and river Saraswathi the Rishis invited 'Kavasha' to attend the performance of 'Yaga'. According to Manusmriti, 2, when two statements in the Veda contradict each other both have to be accepted. Thus, even if it is prescribed in one part of the Veda that the Kshatriya and Vaisya should not teach Veda and that the Sudra shall not even learn it permission given to the Sudra in another part of the Veda to learn it entitles him to learn the Vedas. Manu only says that the Brahmins should prescribe the duties of others and themselves do theirs and does not say that sudras should not learn Vedas. This only indicates the need for division of labour as in the case of the King, the church fathers, patricians and plebeins of Rome. Swamikal emphatically says that nowhere it has been stated that the Sudras besides performing the duties of their Varna (Social group) should not try to acquire knowledge. The denial to the Sudras the right to learn Vedas is not found in other Smritis. Even if such denial is found it has to be remembered that Smritis are more authoritative than Puranas and Vedas are more authoritative than Smritis[5]. Swamikal points out that Justification or authority can be found for anything in the puranas. They need only to be discarded and not denounced when they are contradictory to the Vedas.

Chattambi Swamikal found it necessary to discuss the statement 'Na Sthree Soodrow Vedamadheeyatham'. The statement has been subjected to terse criticism that it is neither Veda nor

5. The Apasthamba Smriti. The Vyasa Smriti also points out that the Smriti statements contradicting Vedas do not count.

Smriti but only Sutra and as such need not be recognised as authoritative. It need not be condemned since it only means that women and Sudras need not necessarily learn Vedas. It does not tantamount to a prohibitory order that women and Sudras should not learn the Vedas. The commentator who explained it negatively need not be found fault with since commentators usually attribute artificial meaning to statements in order to leave the existing practice undisturbed. The 'Parasara Smriti' when describing the state of things in the Kaliyuga has declared that the wife of one who has left the country and gone to some other place or of one who has deceased or of one who has accepted hermitage or of one who is an eunuch or of one who has become down-trodden may marry another. The commentator Madhavachariar has explained away this statement as falling outside 'Yuga dharma'. The Yajnavalkya Smriti states that even after having been given in marriage to a husband a virgin girl may discard him if she gets a better husband. The next stanza clarifies that such a step can be taken by a girl whether she has attained puberty or not. Vijnaneswara, the commentator pretends not to have seen the second stanza and glides over the matter by stating that a virgin girl is pure and belongs to another. In the third and sixth Brahmana of 'Brihadaranyakopanishad' reference has been made to a woman by name 'Gargi' attaining such proficiency in the Vedas that she could discuss the meaning of Vedas with Yajnavalkya, a scholar of eminence. Yajnavalkya was a scholar who could not be defeated in debate by Scholars like 'Aaswalan', 'Aarthabhagan', 'Bhuju', 'Ushasthan', 'Kaholan', etc.

In the fifth chapter of the work 'Vedadhikara Niroopanam' Chattampi Swamikal conducts common sense discussion. In any Hindu religious treatise it is found laid down that salvation can be attained only by observing 'dharma' and understanding the structure of the 'empirical self' and 'Universal self'. For example the gita says

"Bahoonam Janmanamanthe
Jnanavan Mam Prapadyathae"

(After taking several lives in the world one who has attained knowledge alone joins me). To say that the Sudra should not learn the Vedas is tantamount to saying that the Sudra shall not attain salvation. The Vaishnavas who believe that they are superior Brahmins admit that Sudras like 'Thirukkchchi Nambi' and Thiruppanazhuvar' have attained salvation. They explain that the Sudra may understand the meaning of Vedas though he should not read them. Swamikal sarcastically questions whether the words or sound of the Vedas are more important than their meaning. It is only as good as saying that the box in which diamonds are kept is more important than the diamonds themselves. The Rig Veda says that one who reads the Vedas without understanding their meaning is only as good as a pillar which bears a beam. It has been pointed out that the Brahmin may not prohibit the Sudras from reading the puranas. If so, one who reads the puranas comes across vedic statements. Many puranas, significantly, have been written by Sudras[6]. Swamikal retorts to the explanation that the origin of a Rishi or River need not be taken into consideration by humorously pointing out that such answers are given to anything for which satisfactory explanation cannot be given[7]. Responding to the statement that one who is born of a Brahmin may be considered a Brahmin Swamikal points out that Pandu, Dhritarashtra and Vidura who were sons of Vyasa ceased to be Brahmins. Pandu and Dhritarashtra became Khatriyas whereas Vidura remained Sudra since his mother was a 'dasi' (one who does menial work). If the mother is important then Vysasa himself should have been considered Sudra. Those who have lost Brahminhood by the prostitution of their respective mothers must have lost also the authority to learn the Vedas. On the other hand if succession is traced through the father it will come to be that those born through regular family life should not learn the Vedas but that those born through prostitution may learn the Vedas.

6. For eg: Sootha Samhita. Further Parasara was the son of a canoe roving woman.

7. n.2, P. 71

Chattambi Swamikal inquires how Brahmanhood is attained. He questions whether it is attained by birth or work or acquisition of knowledge about 'Brahmom' or by the combination of all these three. Discussing the fact of birth Swamikal asks whether the father alone must be Brahmin or whether the mother alone must be Brahmin or whether both should be Brahmin. If we accept the first the children born to Nayar women of Brahmin father must have the right to learn Vedas. If we accept the second the children born to Brahmin women through prostitution may have to be accepted. If we accept the third 'Parasara' and 'Vyasa' are not Brahmins. If both father and mother are Brahmins one born to them and falls into evil ways may also have to be recognised as Brahmin. If Brahmanhood will be lost as a result of one's action the logical conclusion is that birth does not count in determining Brahmanhood and also that Brahmanhood is attained by one's action or work alone.

'Janmana Jayate Sudra
Karmana Jayate Dwija'

Swamikal categorically states that Brahmanhood is attained by one's work and that those Brahmins who do not observe 'dharma' cease to be Brahmins and also that those Sudras who observe dharma cease to be Sudras and become Brahmins[8]. No Primacy can be conceived of for Brahmins and no disability can be imposed upon Sudras. One should have dharma besides knowledge to become a Brahmin.

---

8. Ibid., P. 74

## CHAPTER IV

# Evaluation of Christianity

The book 'Kristhu Matha Chchetanam' or in-depth examination of Christianity was written by Chattampi Swamikal in the year 1890 in order to counter the malicious propaganda conducted by Christian missionaries against the principles and beliefs of Hinduism[1]. The missionaries used to come from Kottayam to Ettumanoor at the time of the temple festival in the latter place to conduct Christian propaganda meetings. The speeches of the missionaries contained condemnation of Hinduism more than exposition of the principles of the Christian faith[2]. Assuming the pen name of 'Shanmugha dasan' and without ill will towards the real tenets of Christianity Swamikal wrote Christumatha Chchetanam in order to bring attention to the discrepancies that have crept into the writings on Christianity and its actual practise. The fanticism and false propaganda of the Christian missionaries deserved to be exposed and countered. In continuation the 'Christumata Sara' (essence of Christianity) was also written to prove that the basic principles of Christianity and Hinduism have no essential difference. Swamikal had also the noble purpose of teaching the Christians the true principles of Christianity regarding which many of them had only inadequate knowledge. Many followers of Christianity simply learned the stories included in the Bible and the Statements without understanding their real

1. Chattambi Swamikal deputed Kalikavu Neelakanta Pillai to the north of Kottayam and Karuva Krishnan Asan towards the south for propagating the ideas contained in Christumata Chchethanam.

2. In the preface to Christumata Chchetanam Swamikal frowns at the Christian propagandists who misinterprets Hinduism and authentic statements in the sruti, smriti, etc. and publishes books condemning Hinduism such as 'Ajnanakutaram', 'Kuruttu Vazhi', 'Marujanmom' etc, in order to mislead ignorant and poor Hindus. He takes exception to the questionable practice of giving economic help for evangelisation. Swamikal also warned that unless effective counter measures are taken the Hindus may lose their numerical strength.

import and worth. To a questioner who believed that Swamikal was hostile towards Christianity he replied that according to Christianity everything should be examined and the good must be accepted. For examining anything in the interior of the object it must be broken up. Swamikal explained that he had only done that.[3]

## A. CHRISTUMATASARAM (The essence of Christianity)[8]

Christianity conceives God as three persons in one-father (Yahova), Son (Christ) and Spirit of Sanctity (Parithratma). These persons are omni present, omniscient, free, formless and unemotional. They possess, truth, supreme knowledge, compassion, justice, sympathy, goodness, qualitative excellence and contentment. The duties of God includes creation, care, destruction, punishing and blessing. The deputies of God were created in the other world and those among them who proved to be hostile were transformed into devils and placed in the hell. On the sixth day of creation Man was finally created in the form of God. Life-power was puffed in through the nostrils. After creating a woman also from the body of man both of them were blessed to remain in the Athen garden to make the world populous. Animals and fruits were marked as the food of man except the fruit of a tree which stood in the middle of the garden. If that fruit is eaten Man will meet with death and will acquire the capacity to distinguish between the 'good' and the 'evil'.

The Cobra which had power over the devils approached the woman and tempted her to eat the fruit and thereby avoid death and acquire the capacity for keen observation and knowledge for distinguishing the 'good' from 'bad'. When given by the woman the Man also ate the fruit. Realising nakedness they covered it with the help of leaves. On the approach of 'Yahova' they hid

8. K. Bhaskara Pillai, Chattampi Swamikal (Malayalam) P.P. 47-48.

themselves behind the trees and disclosed what had happened. Yahova cursed the serpent and proclaimed that it will move on ground with the help of stomach and develop enmity towards the woman and her progeny. The woman was cursed to deliver children with pain and be subservient to man. As the earth has become cursed by the behaviour of man it will give thorny plants and trees. Toiling in the earth man will return to the sandy earth. Yahova continues to create men. The evil men are punished and the good are blessed.

An empirical self (Jeevatma) is one who has been created by Yahova in pure form endowed with mind and having the qualities of thought, consciousness, knowledge, love, anger, happiness and sorrow. Those among the empirical selves who have not sinned since creation and those who have liberated themselves from sin are pure. Those of the empirical selves who have sinned and also 'inherited the sin of ancestors are impure.

Bondage can be of two kinds (1) Matter created by God such as earth, water, air and brilliance and (2) fear, suffering, decease, death, etc. which are acquired by not doing prescribed duty and doing the prohibited duties. It also assumes the form of aptitude and is bequeathed to later generations. The former again assumes two forms - those remaining as pure as has been created and those which have become impure by the sin of man. The cause of sorrow can be removed by confession or repentence and when not removed in this manner it becomes the cause of permanent sorrow. Those who have become unattached by acquiring knowledge of the Bible alone could attain salvation. The sinners as well as those who do good deeds without biblical knowledge suffer permanent sin in the other world. Christ who is born with the qualities of man and god receives initiation at the age of thirty from Yahova and imbibes the eagerness of the spirit of sanctity. Without food he undergoes the ordeals of the devil in the forest for forty days. Christ triumphs over the devil, performs wonders,

observes the dictates of Yahova which are violated by men, appoints apostles, owns all the sins of men, suffers pain on behalf of men, sacrifies life in the cross, comes to life again on the third day and sits on the right side of Yahova.

The repentence done by Christ results in salvation. Undaunted faith in Christ alone is useful for achieving divine blessing. Truth, justice and compassion are helpful factors but do not constitute repentence. Faith in Christ alone is helpful to wipe out sin since man left to himself is incapable of practising repentence. Since Christ alone has that power Yahova has ordained that Christ should come to earth, triumph over the devil and sacrifice himself to bless men. Yahova was actually pointing to this when he cursed the serpent that the descendents of Eve will cut off its head. 2513 years after creation Yahova appeared before Moses and commanded three codes of behaviour:- Moral code, Code of duties and code of law. The Moral code commands :- worship one god, non-worship of another god, desisting from reciting god's name in a casual manner, caring parents, desisting from killing, avoiding licentious sexual life etc. The code of duties includes cleaning body, fasting, offerings, etc. The code of law prescribes rules relating to war, peace, mother, children, food, cloth, house, lordship, money, sheep, cow, bird, human body, etc.

The spirit of sanctity helps in creation. The empirical self awakens devotees and makes them to produce the Bible. Christ is created as a sinless man and those who believe in Christ could brighten their mind and know the Bible. The believers are made to understand that recitation and devotion is the chief way of realising the spirit of sancity. Every one should understand Christianity, become aware of his sin, repent, believe in Christ by following the path given in the Bible, join the Sree Sabha, gain god's blessing, recite the Bible, propagate it and remain without losing the balance. At the time of the ending of the world Lord Christ comes to the earth on the day of reckoning for taking stock of

everyone's sins and good deeds. Those who are dead are brought to life without their body. The moral persons are made to stand on his right and the immoral on his left. The immoral persons who do not believe in him are forced to the hell of fire and sulphur. The moral persons who believe in him are placed in heaven where there is no sin, sorrow and death. These persons remove their sin, enter the sacred place of salvation, praises the greatness of god and enjoy the pleasure of remaining in heaven permanently.

Swamikal questions the statement of Christian propagandists that Yahova created the world from vaccuum. Without cause there is no effect anywhere. From pure cause results pure effect. Only from impure cause impure effect results. Oil will not come out of sand and gold will not produce iron. As we require the pot-maker and sand for the production of pot the creator as well as matter, the basic thing, are required for the creation of the world. To say that the creator alone is enough for creation is illogical. If Yahova had created the world by omniscience he must have had discrimination and as such created only the 'good' and not the sinners. If god is fully independent and has created the world according to his own will and pleasure he could dispense with sin and blessedness, make rock soft, water hard, fire comfortable, etc. Otherwise he will have to create depending upon the earth and cease to have independent existence. Swamikal points out that god's independence means only that he is not guided by another force or object and not that he can brave the law of life. An examination of the material cause of creation indicates also that Yahova does not have godly qualities.

## B. CHRISTUMATHA CHCHETANAM
## (Critical Analysis of Christianity)

Chattambi Swamikal addresses himself to the propagandists of Christianity. Without questioning the prescribed Christian codes of behaviour he takes exception to the conduct of propaganda which does not square with the core of Christian belief. The con-

tradictions and narrations between texts in the Bible are pointed out humorously but without any trace of condemnation. Quoting the Bible Swamikal says that Yahova created Man for proving his greatness and furthering his selfish interests. The devil was let loose to test Adam and Eve who became sinners due to temptation. Even after that the physical form of Adam and Eve was adopted in creation. As a result their descendents became sinners. The sinners are subjected to unending torture in order to prevent the goodmen deviating from the path of good life. All prescriptions fulfil the purpose of making Yahova happy. Thus the selfishness of creation becomes clear. It is also evident that the greatness of Yahova was not radiant before creation and as such he lacked fullness of his being. As he was concerned with attaining fullness he lacked supreme and celestial happiness. From this it follows that Yahova desired to have pleasure and was angry at things causing sorrow. Yahova is not all powerful since he was not able to discriminate the sinners and the blessed without subjecting all men to severe testing. He also did not know before hand that Adam will commit sin. Evidently, Yahova does not possess godly qualities and is under worldly limitations. If the Bible is sacred book and therefore unquestionable all sacred books are unquestionable and the argument that Christianity alone is true religion stands invalidated.

**THE BEGINNING OF CREATION**

Chattambi Swamikal shatters the conception of the first creation of Yahova. Having placed an attractive and poisonous fruit before Adam and Eve who did not have knowledge of the beneficial and the 'harmful' they are teased for doing the prohibited thing. If Yahova had been omniscient why did not he foresee the danger. How could the devil be strong enough to cheat Man created in the form of god himself. If god was not there when the prohibited fruit was eaten he is not all-present and if he failed to ward off the devil he did not possess supreme power. If Yahova had permitted the devil to cheat man he must have been unsympa-

thetic to his own creation. If the emissaries of god were polluted by the devil how can the devil be other than Yahova since no other devil was there. For the crime of the devil assuming the form of serpent Yahova curses all serpents and spares the devil and the tree. Swamikal takes exception to the repentence of Yahova for having created men.[4] If Yahova did not know beforehand that men may become sinners or the divine emissary may become the devil he did not have Supreme knowledge. If he knew beforehand he is unkind since he has knowingly made men to suffer. In this context the entire responsibility for this state of affairs rests with Yahova only. Quoting the Bible[5] Swamikal points out that Yahova seems to have pre-determination and as such all the misfortune has taken place as ordained by him. It is very unjust to torture human souls for the sin committed by Yahova. This also points to the absence of godly qualities in Yahova.

## EVIL QUALITY

Chattambi Swamikal accuses the Christian propagandists of the crime of attributing to Yahova the good qualities which did not exist. Significantly, the bad qualities like vindictiveness, anger, spite, cruelty, etc. are conceded by the propagandists. The possession of bad qualities by Yahova has been proved by Swamikal with the help of excerpts from the Bible. All the children born first to their respective mothers in Misrayim were killed at midnight[6]. The Israelis were induced to abscond after borrowing the ornaments of their neighbours.[7] Swamikal substantiates that Yahova has 'form' and is not without form. If Yahova is without form he would have created men formless since the Bible states that Yahova created man in his own form.[8] As life power

4. Aadi Pusthaka (original book) Chapter VI, sentence 6-7
5. Roma, Chapter VIII, sentence 29; Romakkar, Chapter 22, sentence 23; Tessaloniyakkar, Chapter 2, sentence 13.
6. Purappad Book, Chapter 12
7. Ibid; Chapter II
8. Bible old testament, Chapter I, Sentece 26, 27.

was infused through the nostrils of man by god he has created only the body of man and the life power is his own life power put into man's body through the nostrils. The creation cannot be in the form of knowledge since man cannot distinguish between the good and 'the evil'. If by 'form' is meant knowledge god also had only knowledge which Adam and Eve had before eating the fruit. If god had knowledge he also must have eaten the fruit sometime before. Adam hid himself from Yahova. If Adam and Yahova are formless there is no need for bashfulness.

**THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

Chattambi Swamikal substantiates that Christ does not have godliness. Yosimoss was a contemporary writer who, however, omits the wonders said to have been worked by Christ such as darkness setting in on the day of crucifixion and eruption of volcano. The Bible is silent regarding the day of birth and death of Christ. If a new star appeared on the birthday of Christ such a star has not been recognised by astronomers. Granting that Christ was really born children below the age of two were killed on that day. The whole place was immersed in sorrow. If god's son was born the people of the place must have been jubilant. As Christ suffered more pain than an ordinary individual he may be reckoned as more sinning than the others. It has been said (Markose, Chapter XIII, Sentence 32) that 'Father' alone knew the day and time of Christ's birth. If so the emissaries in heaven and the Son (Christ) did not know that day. Thus Christ did not possess supreme knowledge. Christ is merely addressed as 'Son' and not as the son of God. But, he is also described not as the son of man. Even if Christ has foretold things it does not matter much since astrologers and such other people foretell things. If we cannot believe in the foretelling of astrologers how could we believe the Bible in foretelling the end of the world and the dispensation of justice by Christ. Swamikal gives further proof to substantiate that Christ did not have godliness. He points out that Christ could

not understand that the Ficus glomerata will not have fruits in the particular season. Like ordinary men Christ had to go near the tree to find out whether it had fruits at that time. Christ cursed that its fruits will not be eaten by anyone.

Swamikal proves that Christ did not have permanent happiness. As Christ realised that his soul was immersed in sorrow he had fear of sorrow and desire for pleasure. Christ hid himself from Yahudas and therefore cannot be considered to be fully free. In the Bible Christ is said to have stated that things happen as ordained by father and not as desired by himself.[9] Further, he tells the mother of Sebati sons that blessing can be given only by the Father. At the time of 'Snanam' (ablution) the 'Pavithratma' entered the body of Christ in the form of dove and was strengthened by an emissary from heaven. Moreover, at the time of demise Christ was described as 'Sevaka' (Server) by god and he cries aloud that he had been deserted by god. Yahova says that he is the father of Israel and that Abraham is his eldest son. Thus Christ is only one of the sons of Yahova and also the youngest son and the youngest god. It can be inferred from this that there are several gods. Swamikal says that Christ can be described as a wonderful man but not as a god. Swamikal questions the Christian belief that the sin of the first man is bequeathed to his successors. If follows from this that such sin will haunt Christ also. Moreover, Christ has not himself said anywhere that he is god. If Christ did not like being described as god why should others do so against his will ?. Christ states that only those who followed his father who is in heaven will enter heaven.[10] When a certain person addressed Christ as good man Christ commented that god alone is great and no one else is. Also Christ did not understand the treachery of Judas. But, when trapped he was cursed.

9. Mathew, Chapter 26, Sentence 39.

10. Ibid; Chapter 7, Sentence 21

Swamikal examines the wonders said to have been performed by Christ. The devil was defeated and driven away. But, who is this devil and created by whom? The Bible significantly is silent on this matter. The interpreters of the Bible, however, state that those heavenly emissaries who did not submit to god were cursed and became the devil. This statement has no basis in the Bible. If Christ is god he must be free from the approach of the devil. But, the devil catches Christ, takes him to the top of a mountain and asks him to obey.[11] If the devil caught hold of Christ as directed by 'Pavithratma' (Atman) and tested him it will amount to testing 'Father, Atman' and Son since all the three are one according to the rule that the three are one. The devil asks Christ who felt hunger to convert stone into pudding and eat it. But Christ could not do it. Again, the devil took Christ to the top of the holy building and told him to jump down with full confidence that god's emissary will save him. But, Christ only warned the devil not to test god. Again, the devil lifted up Christ, took him to the top of a mountain, showed him all the countries and promised to give them all to him provided Christ was willing to lie prostrate before it. The devil, really, seems to be more sympathetic than Yahova since he let off Christ even after disobeying him. An instance can also be cited of devils who caught hold of a certain person asking Christ to give a thousand pigs for food. Christ gave the pigs owned by some person and thereby caused loss to him. The pigs were immersed in the sea and killed by the devils. When the tree (Ficus glomerata) did not give fruits out of season Christ cursed that tree to lose its power of sprouting . Christ could have instead made that tree to give fruit and proved his greatness. According to the Bible some of those who lived at the time of Christ will witness the end of the world and the dispensation of justice by Christ. But the ending of the world had not taken place in A.D. 1000.

---

11. Lukos, Chapter 4, Sentence 13

Chattambi Swamikal examines the question that Christ sacrificed his life to wipe out the sin of other people. If Christ voluntarily sacrificed his life he should not have secretly wandered and caused to be caught. Since Christ accepted Judas as a disciple he must have been ignorant of the latter's intention. If the treachery of Judas is the cause of the suffering of Christ it is not sacrifice (Papa Bali) and if the date had been pre-determined by Father the poor Judas should not have been cursed. Regarding Christ coming back to life after death Swamikal considers the question of who has seen it as very relevant. The Yahudas who were present at that time describe it as falsehood. The authors of the Bible do not say they have seen it and only say that he or she has seen it. Mathai, Markose, Lukose and Yohannan who believed that Christ came back to life make contradictory statements. Swamikal responds to the argument of the Christian propagandists that no one denies the incident though their statements contradict each other by humorously commenting that if four persons swear to have seen a white crow at four different places and since no one of them deies the existence of the white crow the existence of the white crow will not be proved. As Christ could not show any miracle he was executed. The courtiers of the Pharoah of Egypt did miracles excelling those of Moses. Even if one works miracles he cannot simply be considered god.

Swamikal rejects the belief in the day of reckoning. If after death the souls go to hell or heaven or from heaven to hell there is no meaning in holding trial. Christ cannot be the arbitrator since he is responsible for making some persons sorrowful and allowing others to enjoy pleasure. Swamikal asks the tenable question of as to what can be the basis and the norms of trial ? The Bible cannot be made the basis since its various parts do not agree with each other. Moreover, how is it that the Bible can be made applicable to those who do not know its commandments? Swamikal takes exception to the belief that those who do not think of Christ go to hell since all good people do not belong to Christianity.

Those who are born deaf or blind or having imbalance of mind from the time of birth also could not think of Christ. Some persons having been created as bad and others as good the souls are taken to task on the day of reckoning and sent to hell or heaven as the case may be. As Christ owns all the sins of the past and present it is unjust to make others also agonise.

In examining the role of the spirit of sanctity in creation Swamikal raises some important doubts regarding the Christian belief that the spirit of sanctity (Pavithratma) helps Yahova in the act of creation. Since Yahova solicites the help of the spirit of sanctity in the act of creation he is not omnipotent. Why did the spirit of sanctity get the Bible composed by devotees instead of doing it himself ? Christ was created by the spirit of sanctity as a man without sin and as such the former must have been pure and knowledgeable. In this context it is superfluous for the 'Pavithratma' to enter the body of Christ as a dove. It is also lamentable that Christ was not protected when he was in the Cross. When the devil assumed the form of serpent for cheating the early man the whole species of serpents was cursed. But, when the spirit of sanctity assumed the form of dove for a noble cause the dove as a class was not blessed.

The conception of divinity as pertaining to the three entities has been challenged by Chattambi Swamikal with reference to the Bible. Yahova has been mentioned as god in the Bible which, however, makes no such reference with regard to Christ. Instead of saying 'Father, Son and Sacred Soul' it has been said as 'god, son and sacred soul'.[12] It is evident from this that Yahova alone is god and that the other two are not. Further Yahova is said to have declared that he alone is god and that there is no other god except himself. Responding to the statement that he is a good being Christ declared that there is no good man except god. Chattambi Swamikal profusely quotes the Bible in order to substantiate that

12. Corinthiar, Chapter 13, Sentence 14.

god is different from Christ. By putting forward tenable and logical arguments Swamikal establishes that 'god', 'son', and 'sacred soul' are three different entities.

Chattambi Swamikal questions the Christian belief that Yahova introduced life air through the nostrils of man and that this life air becomes the empirical self (Jeevatma). If this is so soul becomes destructible. Moreover, in sleep this life power is not aware of anything. If 'Atman' (Supreme Self) had been there and god placed it in the body it is more or less acceptable. But if the empirical self has been newly created it will cease to exist later when it joins with its cause (Karana). If god had taken sand and water as the basic materials of creation (upadana Karanam) how could it be that the empirical self has been created out of vaccuum. If the empirical self has been created with purity, knowledge and pleasure why it has been given body? If body is required for brightening the knowledge and pleasure it becomes that soul or the empirical self has not been created with purity and knowledge. If the body given first had been pure it would not have had hunger and such other things and the prescription of food becomes falsehood. For pure and enlightened souls body may be unnecessary. If the empirical self had been pure and enlightened even at the time of creation how the prohibited fruit was eaten ? The devil could not have exerted influence over pure and enlightened soul. If god has created men differently in body disease, social position, religion, parts of the world, etc. as he likes it must be said that pleasure, pain, etc. are also given in the same manner and not in relation to their good and evil deeds. Evidently, there must be some reason for god creating men differently. That reason must be the past actions of man. Thus the 'Atman' (empirical self) has existed from unknown days (Anadi) and is not created in the middle of creation.

Chattambi Swamikal expresses surprise at the Christian belief that animals, birds, etc. do not have 'Atman' (Supreme Self). He examines the nature of the Supreme self the main feature of which

is possession of knowledge. The functioning of the ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose are the basis of the possession of knowledge. The body without these is known as dead body. Thus the supreme self is of the form of knowledge. If animals, birds, reptiles, etc. do not have 'Atman' (Supreme self) how do they respire, move about, sleep, reproduce, etc. ? If the Christian propagandists argue that this is only common knowledge and not superior knowledge it is bound to be wrong since a book is as book with 4000 pages or with smaller number of pages and smaller size. Can we call a scholar an 'Atman' (Supreme Self) and an illiterate a dead body ? If one with capacity for discrimination alone is to be considered as part of supreme self a baby one year old, a madman, one who is in deep sleep or one under the effect of anaesthasia may be described as one not being part of the Supreme Self. Swamikal quotes European writers to substantiate that the human soul is only enriched animal soul and regarding the capacity of the senses some animals are superior to human beings. In support of his point of view swamikal quotes the Bible[13] which says that the serpent is more cunning than the other living beings. He also contradicts the Christian belief that animals are meant by god as food for man. Swamikal contradicts also the Christian belief that the sin of early man is bequeathed to the later generations. Sin which is neither 'matter' nor 'quality' is in fact doing the 'prohibited' and not doing the 'prescribed'. Man is indebted to his parents for his body and not for his soul. Soul cannot be cut or something added to it. Sin committed by one soul does not affect another. Significantly, disabled children are born sometimes to parents who have no physical disability. Bad children are born to good parents and good children are born to bad parents. Even the most autocratic kings do not punish a person for the wrongs committed by another.

Chattambi Swamikal examines the Christian belief that Yahova cursed man for having violated his prescription and later sent his

13. Bible old testament, Chapter III, Sentence 1.

son to wash away the sin of Man. Yahova must have realised even before creation the possibility of man committing sins or at least should not have cursed him after being created. Since Christ was sent by Yahova he was not fully independent and the two cannot be considered to be equals. It is unjust to allow Christ to take over the sins of others since it has been stated in the sacred book[14] that one who commits sin himself must be executed. If Christ can be considered to have taken over the sins of others he will surely be in hell permanently. It is illogical to say that Christ could wipe out sins which man may commit in the future since one cannot take meals for satisfying his future hunger. Swamikal considers fun the conception that the sinners are liberated just like a King punishes himself and his son for the crime of some people violating his dictates.

Swamikal takes exception to the Christian belief that god gives equal punishment to all sinners at all times. Equal punishment cannot be given for all kinds of sins and to a person who has committed one sin only and to anther who has committed a number of sins. For e.g., the same punishment cannot be inflicted for sexual immorality when it is committed by a person with each woman having different kinds of relationship with him. Also, the same punishment cannot be prescribed for doing a sinful act once and for repeating it. From the statement that for the man who has handed Christ over for punishment will have more sin it is evident that sin can be more or less. The ultimate aim of giving punishment is to bring the sinners back to the path of sobreity and not vindictively making it perpetual. It is unsympathetic not to give relief to the sinners in the underworld who continuously clamour for help even after they have undergone punishment. It will also be repudiation of the solemn belief that confidence in Christ is the road to salvation. A person who suffers for his sins is entitled to enjoyment as rewards for his good deeds. Salvation can be based only on good deeds and not mere repentences.

14. Avarthana Pustak, Chapter 24, Sentence 14

Swamikal points out that the Bible itself gives proof that good deeds are rewarded.[15] When you do good deed make it secret. Father will give reward openly. Since everything will cease to exist ultimately hell alone cannot be permanent.

The conception that those who are liberated from bondage will enjoy pleasure permanently and in the same manner is as unacceptable as the conception that all sinners will permanently suffer pain in a similar manner. Permanent bliss is possible only for the soul and not for one with temporary body. The description of liberation from bondage in the Bible indicates that it is in a specific place and those who are in it are endowed with body. Since the Bible itself says that even that place will cease to exist bliss may not be permanent. The Bible further states that some among those in heaven will lose control over senses without internal or external reasons. Swamikal laments that brute force and inhuman practices were employed for the propagation of Christianity[16] and arrives at the conclusion that unbearable torture was the compelling force behind the spread of Christianity and not the realisation of the converts that Christianity is preferable to other religions.

15. Lukos, Chapter 14, Sentence 13 and 14.

16. A King called Theodosius prohibited the practice of other religions and confiscated the property of non-Christians. (gibbon's decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. V, iii, PP412-3) A woman called Ipathiya who propagated her our religion in the 5th century AD was dragged to the Christian Church, stripped naked and cut to pieces. (Bible, Purappad Pustak, Chapter 22, Sentence 20). In Armenia about a lakh of people were killed during the reign of Empress Theodora.

## CHAPTER V

# Analysis of Advaita Vedanta and Road to Salvation

Chattambi Swamikal has indicated in a simple, convincing and authoritative manner the nature of the Infinite and the path for the realisation of ultimate knowledge. Just as a piece of coir appears to be cobra or the sky appears to be blue in colour the indivisible, full and perfectly pleasant Infinite appears to be original nature. As a result of the presence of the Infinite the three qualities have arisen in the original nature- 'Satwam', 'Rajas' and 'Thamas' - with the ascribed colours white, red and black respectively. Each of these three qualities is further divided into three - 'Satwa in Satwom', 'Rajas in Satwom', and 'Thamas in Satwom'; 'Satwa in Rajas', 'Rajas in Rajas', and 'Thamas in Rajas'; 'Satwa in Thamas', 'Rajas in Thamas' and 'Thamas in Thamas'. The universal nature of Satwom is illusion, that of Rajas is activity and that of Thamas is inertia. Vishnu has come from Satwa in Satwom, Brahma from Rajas in Satwom and Rudra from Thamas in Satwom. From Satwa in Rajas has come men of knowledge, from Rajas in Rajas dutiful men and from Thams in Rajas the underdeveloped empirical self. From Satwa in Thamas has come the inner senses and organs of intelligence, from Rajas in Thamas the five vital airs and organs of work, and from Thamas in Thamas the five ingredients (Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Sky). The Universal power (the Infinite) which reflects on all these qualities reflects on Satwa like the Sun on clear water and in Rajas like the Sun dimly on impure water. Thamas divides itself into ignorance and awareness of multiplicity. 'Ignorance' has the quality of covering up the object and 'awareness of multiplicity' multiplies an object. The power of ignorance covers up the inner eye of those who think that they consist of the physical body. As a result, they are not able to understand their link with the basic Universal power. Ignorance becomes the instrument of innumerable miseries like

life and death. From the awareness of multiplicity arose the sky which can only be heard and from that in the order of sequence given arose air, fire, water and finally earth.

With lucidity Swamikal explains the functioning of the human body with the help of vital air system. In addition five subsidiary air systems also function. The physical body has three conditions of the empirical self coalesing in the Infinite. Sleep is 'dina pralay' or daily occurrence, fainting is 'Avanthara pralaya' and death is 'Maha pralaya' or great pralaya. The physical body is impermanent since it has birth and death. But, the astral body exists so long as the causative body exists. In the full, indivisible and brilliant universal power the non-existent or physical body is only an illusion. The universal soul is one and the same with Atman. They are mistaken as two just like in the dim light a piece of coir is mistaken for cobra and later in the full light it is recognised as coir. Swamikal contradicts the unreality of distinguishing the physical body from the original nature on the basis of the principle that effect is not different from the cause. Every effect is merged into its cause. The twenty principles of the physical body controlling metabolic activity merge with the five elements of the body - Earth, Water, fire, air and sky. These five elements merge with the 'ignorance' of the subtle five elements of the body. The power of projection and concealing merge into their cause which is the ignorant nature. The causative body is the ignorance of one's real self. When ignorance is removed by analysing the form of the causative body the 'Atman' shines fully. Everything will be seen to be within oneself. 'Brahma', 'Vishnu' and 'Siva' merge with their cause (original nature) and the original nature merges with the universal soul. The realisation that there is nothing separate from the Infinite power and that the Infinite power is oneself is the way to salvation.

Chattambi Swamikal tersely analyses the principles underlying human anatomy. Sound, touch, form, taste and smell are the five

ingredients of the human body which are also the cause of the origin of the Universe. The air for respiration which is naturally present in the body starts from the end of the backbone. One part of it reaches the Kapalam (Cranium) or skull and the other part goes out through the nostrils or the mouth. What is left behind is taken back to the bottom of the backbone (Mooladharam). Thus the air goes up and down. Forceful respiration in sleep is natural but while awake it is an indication of the end of life. The five vital airs illuminated by respiration remains in the different parts of the body. The mind, intellect memory and egoism are present in the inner self. The mind operates on the matter which is seen on the spot. Memory draws some inference immediately after the mind has operated. The intellect weighs the pros and cons of the influence drawn and decides upon the appropriate action. Egoism is the preparedness to do something. The action taken by maintaining this sequence is the natural one. If this sequence is violated it may cause harm to the body, loss of prestige and loss of money. Repentence can be rewarding only if the wrong deed is regretted and not repeated. Three prominent airs assuming the qualities of three elements known as water, fire and wind take the form of elements known as 'Slaeshma', 'Pitta' and 'Vatha'. If the 'Slaeshma' element increases it is dangerous. If the 'Pitta' element changes its nature it causes the increase of 'Slaeshma' element and as a result causes danger to life. These elements are quite useful in understanding the condition of the body. Besides these three there are minor 'airs' which split up food and carry them along with water to the various parts of the body and enrich them. The residue is sent out of the body through perspiration. The solid part of the residue is excreted through the anus and by urination. Dirty water and other dirt go out of the body through the concerned opening of it. Systematic food, requisite sleep and work for stirring up the five 'airs' are necessary. Egoism gives strenght to the 'airs'. Without getting immersed in this body and its functioning Man should search the ultimate truth and complete his life.

**The unreality of the world and realisation of 'Brahmam'.**

The discussion that follows takes the form of questions put by the seeker of 'Truth' and answers given by the Enlightened Acharya. Is the world real or unreal ?

It is wrong to believe that the objects understood by the senses are real and others are unreal. In dim light a 'Post' may appear to be a thief and a piece of coir a cobra. But in full light they may be understood in their real form. It is also wrong to assume that what is not understood by the senses are unreal. The 'Atman', 'Easwar' and atoms are beyond the reach of the senses. Yet, they are not unreal. Since the world can be recognised by the senses it should not be said that it is permanent. Only in terms of the present experience could we say that the world is such and such. The determination of the real form of the world by the present experience alone is just like a jaundice patient arguing that all objects are yellow in colour. The real exists in the present, past and future and does not merge with the world that takes shape, changes, progresses or is destroyed. Coir appears to be serpent because of the absence of real knowledge which consists of understanding coir as coir only.

For the formation of an object three causes or factors are necessary- 'Upadana Karanam', 'Nimithakaranam' and 'Sahakari Karanam'. For eg: in the case of the production of a pot sand is the 'Upadana', the potter is the 'nimitha' and the wheel and such other things is the 'Sahakari'. The world cannot be considered real on the only ground that it exists for ever. Pertinently, it does not exist for ever. The world which we experience when we are awake (Jagrath) gets destroyed in sleep (Swapna) and sound sleep (sushupti). What appears to be real in one condition appears to be unreal in the other two. The world whose cause is 'Brahmom' need not be real as 'Brahmom'. 'Brahmom' becomes the world because of ignorance or illusion. The world which is attributed to 'Brahmom' due to ignorance is unreal since it has no independent

existence. Just us the serpent contemplated in coir disappears when the coir is understood as such the world contemplated in 'Brahmom' (Infinite) disappears when 'Brahmom' is understood as such. But, the 'Sanyasins' who have realised the 'Brahmom' engage themselves in advising the disciples, establishing hermitage, writing treatise, etc. on account of their worldly life. But they are fully aware that the world is unreal just as one who understands the presence of mirrage will not believe that there is water. Reality is of three kinds - Paramarthika Satha which is unchanging at any time, 'Vyavaharika Satha' which remains unchanging during the present time like pot, picture, etc. and 'Prathibhasika Satha' which is reality only during a certain period, eg: Coir appearing to be serpent. Something that exists will not cease to exist, for eg. pot which is made out of sand will cease to exist when it is again turned into sand. Only the form of the pot is lost. It is not that the pot was existent and later ceased to exist. What is real is real and what is unreal is unreal.

After establishing that origin, existence and destruction are separate Chattambi Swamikal says that a cause has effect and that this cause itself may be the effect of something else. The effect itself may be the cause of some other effect. The assertion that the ultimate and indivisible atom alone does not have effect, therefore, is meaningless. If a cause is required for the origin of the world and only if the Atom is permanent the world can be also real. In this context how can the end of anything be decided upon? The end of something itself may be the beginning of something else. There is no proof for the assertion that there is a very small atom which cannot be seen. To the argument that since no body has seen the end of the world it is real Swamikal responds by pointing out that what is real has necessarily to be permanent. Also there is no meaning in asserting that the world which is unreal is permanent. Swamikal answers the question that even if the world is unreal pain and pleasure are experienced by pointing out that pain and pleasure are experienced significantly by Men

who are the effect. Even the body which is the cause of man is the effect of flesh, blood, bone, etc and therefore unreal. Mind, intellect, soul and egoism when they become unreal are joined by pain and pleasure. If the world and its pain and pleasure are to be understood as unreal one should keep away from it just like if one wants to understand the form of a pot he should keep away from it. What is seen in the dream seem to be real but the reality is lost when the dream is over. Similarly, what is seen with this unreal body will disappear in the 'Thuriavastha' which is the fourth stage when the Infinite is experienced. The other three stages are 'awakened condition' '(Jagrath), dreaming (Swapnam) and deep sleep (Sushupti). These three conditions merge in 'Thuriam' when the Infinite is experienced. The Supreme self (Atman) shines even when one is awake, dreaming and is in deep sleep. 'Atman' or Supreme self is real since it reflects on action, senses nescience and inner self (Anta Karana). Every one is not able to experience the 'Atman' because they are ignorant.

**Spiritual absorption (Samadhi) and experience of the Universal being.**

When ignorance ends forms known by names disappear and the Infinite shines. This condition is that of spiritual absorption in which worldly existence is not at all experienced. In deep sleep also worldly existence is not experienced but its nuclear (nesience) is experienced. Deep sleep is the merging of the worldly things in nescience. So, the world exists as the cause in the form of nescience in deep sleep. A person who awakes from deep sleep remembers that he has slept soundly. The cause of this remembrance is the experience during deep sleep. There are three things in what one may say 'I have slept comfortably with out knowing anything - 'I', 'without knowing anything' and comfortably'. 'Without knowing anything' is nescience. This nescience which rests on 'Atman' is the cause of world. Nescience has the name also of 'Karana prapancha' or the cause of the world. Looked at

from this angle there is worldly experience in deep sleep. But, in spiritual absorption gross matter world (Sthula prapancha) or subtle world (Sookshma prapancha) are not experienced. One who meditates as 'I am the Infinite' after being blessed by the 'Guru' (Spiritual teacher) with the words 'that thou Art' (Tat twam Asi) thinks that he is the Infinite. In this condition (Savikalpa Samadhi) 'I becomes the meditator and the 'Infinite' becomes what is meditated upon. This kind of spiritual absorption is also known as 'Sabdamuviddha Savikalpa Samadhi'. One who has attained real knowledge in this manner achieves destruction of the mind (Manonasm) and impressions (Vasana). The method by which this condition can be reached is 'Nir Vikalpa Samadhi' in which worldly experience is totally absent. Attributing to a thing duties which do not belong to it is called 'Adhyaropam' and the realisation that every thing merges into the Infinite is called 'Apavadam'. When the knowledge of the Infinite is gained the world becomes totally unreal.

**Knowledge of the Supreme self and loss of nescience.**

In the structure of an object inner self spreads, projects and illuminates its real form and structure. This is the form of knowledge. When the inner self assumes the 'Brahma' form it is knowledge of Brahmam. When such realisation takes place worldly experience transforms itself into Supreme Self. This experience is revealed by the declarations - 'Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma' 'Eesavasyamidam Sarvam' ('Brahmam' or Infinite is real and world is unreal). Posing the question 'Is ignorance and illusion one and the same' Swamikal himself answers it. Maya is the original nature which depends upon the Supreme Self. Since experience of unreal world is created in Supreme self original nature is called Maya. Since it covers the Infinite it is called darkness. Since the original nature is the cause of the world it is called 'Prakriti' and since the Infinite is wrongly described as unreal world it is called 'absence of knowledge'. Maya cannot have any

effect on the Infinite since it is dependent on the latter. Illusion (Maya) is as unreal as world. Illusion is known as 'Anadi' (without a beginning) since it is not known when, how and where it has originated. Swamikal draws attention to the reference in the 'Puranas' and 'Itihasas' that illusion originated in the Infinite and contradicts it by pointing out that the Infinite has no feeling and does not do anything or associates itself with anything. If we say, therefore, that illusion has originated in the Infinite we may have to admit that the Infinite has 'feeling'. But, it is contradictory to the Vedanta Philosophy. The contention that illusion may originate in the empirical self (Jeevan) and the celestial being (Iswar) is also contradictory to the Vedanta Philosophy. On the other hand, pertinently, both the empirical self and celestial being have originated in the illusion without which both of them will not acquire their form. Illusion, therefore, has not originated in anything at any time. In the realisation of the Supreme self every thing except the Supreme self undergoes transformation. On this ground Swamikal concludes that the Supreme self has no origin and is endless while the rest (empirical self, celestial being, ignorance and nescient) have origin.

**Illusion and the concept of power**

Posing the question whether the power of the Supreme self (Brahma Sakti) is also real as the Supreme self itself Chattambi Swamikal explains that from the Supreme self which is pure and has no quality and form the Universe (Jagat) which is impure and having quality and form cannot originate. But, the Universe appears to be existing and for this there must be a cause also. The spiritual teachers, therefore, have inferred that there is a power (sakti) which is capable of originating the Universe and that such power is included in the Supreme self. Chattambi Swamikal gives an example to prove that Sakti (The power creating the Universe) does not belong to the Infinite. Pot is made out of sand but not directly. Also from all kinds of sand pot cannot be made. The

sand has to be processed properly so that the pot can be made. This capacity for processing can be called 'Sakti'. This is applicable to all 'causes' in the world. It is evident that the cause of the origin of the pot is not sand but the processing capacity which is present in the sand. Similarly, the cause of world is not the Supreme self but the world - making capacity which is present in the Supreme self. This capacity is called illusion which also like the world disappears when realisation of the Supreme self takes place. Referring to treatises which say that just like the power to burn remains in fire, the power of flowing in water and the vibrating power in air Swamikal says that the power of illusion remains in the Infinite. Sri Chattambi Swamikal establishes that actions performed by the world do not affect their basis which is the Infinite. Swamikal makes a distinction between 'quality-laden Infinite' and 'quality - less Infinite'. The argument that illusion remains in the Infinite is unacceptable since we will be attributing duties to the Infinite which actually do not belong to it. Regarding the argument that the world merges into illusion Swamikal asks how can illusion which is the cause also be destroyed ? He points out that the 'effect' merging into 'Cause' is the condition of total destruction. Since the Infinite has no occurrence (Utpatti) merging has no relevance. 'Sakti' will remain depending on a powerful object. Thus, in the occurrence of world there are three links - 'Saktan' (Infinite), 'Sakti' (the creating power) and 'Karya' (world). Unless the world occurs we cannot say that 'Sakti' remains. Even after world has occurred 'Sakti' does not reveal itself. Swamikal gives an example. When the artist draws a picture we can admit that he has the power of drawing picture. But, when he is not drawing a picture we cannot admit that he has the power of drawing picture. The artist is 'Saktan', the power to draw picture is 'Sakti' and the picture is 'Kariam' (world). Illusion is ignorance which causes one to imagine the existence of the world in the infinite. It is wrong to say that the world merges into illusion since the latter has no independent existence. The world merges into the Infinite. Illusion cannot have impact on

the Infinite since it disappears when realisation takes place. It is unreal (Midhya)

**How the unreal Illusion could overshadow the Supreme Self?**

Those who realise the Supreme self have the experience of 'I am the Supreme Self'. 'Atman' and Infinite are one and the same. An ordinary person has no experience of the Supreme self when he is awake, dreaming or in deep sleep. One who realises that he is the Supreme Self also understands by his experience that he was ignorant of the Supreme Self till then. Considered in this manner Illusion which is of the form of ignorance depends upon the reality (Sad bhavan) of the Supreme self which is of the form of 'Atman' and also covers up the nature of fullness of the Supreme self. The realisation of 'I am the Supreme Self' destroys permanently the feelings 'I am ignorant', 'I am Stout', 'Lean', 'intelligent', 'Man', 'Brahmin', 'Sudra' etc. Illusion which is the original nature is the 'cause' and the Inner self is the 'effect'. How can the effect destroy the cause ? Chattambi Swamikal points out that plantain after it gives fruit ceases to grow and is eventually destroyed. Similarly the knowledge that arises out of the 'Sat' quality of Illusion becomes the cause of Illusion. One who attains realisation never becomes an ignorant person again.

The study of 'Sastras' alone is not adequate for removing all doubts regarding the Supreme self. One should acquire capability for discrimination, determination, perseverance, moderation, faith, peace of mind, insatiable desire for salvation, etc and desire for caressing a real 'Guru'. When pleased with the disciple's devotion the 'Guru' may kindly preach the Vedanta principles which should be recited and meditated upon and visualise the Supreme self in one's own self. Then only all the doubts will be cleared.

**Destruction of Mind - Sudhadvaita concept**

The Mind conceives worldly life as a sandal wood tree having three bodies known as gross matter (Sthula), Subtle body (Sookshma) and causative body (Karana). The tree has branches

and sub-branches which are the three conditions or stages mentioned above. By one's own imagination a serpent having egoism and selfishness as its two heads and vomiting sensual pleasures as poison is created which spirals the said sandal wood tree and prevents the experiencing of the 'Atman', The forces of insulation 'Avarana) and expulsion 'Vikshepana) are created at the two corners which foils the attempt to approach the eternal pleasure, the Atman. This power of expulsion originates the world and makes one to believe that the five duties of creation, sustenance, destruction, disappearance (Thiroebhava) and blessing done by Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Maheswara and Sadasiva respectively is real.

The life-power is never destroyed although it is witness to birth and death just as the atmosphere is not affected by the coldness of the rain and the heat of sun's rays. If one could think like this he will be freed of birth and death and the path of salvation will be opened. Time does not affect the vision of 'Atman' since the latter goes beyond the former. If one could triumph over time the mind will get destroyed and along with that sorrows like 'life' and 'death'. He will thereby be freed from all 'Karma' (attachment to world and deeds). If false knowledge regarding body (Sareera) is removed worldly involvement will disappear. Eternal bliss will be experienced. When the empirical self identifies itself with he Supreme self all matter will appear to be 'Mind'. Finally matter will disappear and mind alone will remain. In everything one's own 'Atman' will be seen. This is the summary of all Vedanta.

## CHAPTER VI

# Analysis of Non-Violence with Particular Reference to Animals

Man has been created as a non-vegetarian as in the case of many animals. As the carnivorous animals have teeth jutting out Man too has four teeth similar to them. Innumerable animals are killed for various purposes. Chattambi Swamikal poses the question whether Man can claim to be non-violent even if such killings are avoided. Pointing out that if milk can be taken meat also can be taken it is suggested that a man's nature becomes cruel not simply because he takes meat, for eg: the serpent's food is air. In one sense vegetables also constitute non-vegetarian food. While drinking water and even during respiration destruction of life takes place. Since the rule of Nature is that weaker beings are devoured by stronger beings definitely the body of one 'being' is food for another. Swamikal comes to the conclusion that perfect non-violence is an impossibility.

Even if not killed by any 'being' all beings lose life in course of time. The argument that animals have been created as food for man can be countered by pointing out that man too is being killed by stronger animals for getting food. In this context the logical conclusion will be that man too has been created as food for animals. Man, significantly, uses weapons for killing animals and for eating flesh as food he requires condiment and cooking facility whereas the animals use only their hands and teeth for killing man and the flesh is eaten without further processing. From the foregoing statement it follows that man has been created for animals more than the latter have been created for the former. Since Man is conscious of the pain borne by others he deserves priority if the cruelty of animals is to be punished. The principle that without adequate reason no being shall be harmed is baseless since without reasoning and determination no action is ever taken.

Plants and vegetables also have life. Animals, birds, etc. have concern for this world only whereas Man has concern for this as well as the other world. In deep sleep (Sushupti) Man is not conscious of anything and does not respond when called. But, if he is called again he may hear it without understanding it and when called for the third time he may hear and understand. Plants and other non-moving things may be considered to be in the condition which includes the end of the first stage and the beginning of the second. That part of the body which is in contact with the heart alone knows pain and not the part which has been cut off since without blood in the proper proportion pain is not felt. The blood of non-moving things is not capable of knowing pain. Plants and vegetables have only very little power of reasoning and even though they react when they join with certain things they are almost as unresponsive as a dead body.

The practise of violence has two defects - one is causing pain and the other is obstructing the journey to salvation. Every empirical self (Jeevatma) adopts its body according to its inclination and inherent quality and in accordance with aptitudes submerged during the end of the Universe (Pralaya). All such things seek salvation. If any being is killed the journey to salvation is obstructed. Such a being will have to be born again. Thus vegetarians have only 1/5th of Ahimsa. One who gives up food and even water and lives by taking air may be said to be 'Yogi' (hermit). Understanding that violence is present in the consumption of air also one assumes the power to give up consumption of air, controls breathing and attains Vichara Roopa Jnana Samadhi. (Ecstatic consciousness).[1]

Instances are several to indicate the deep consideration of Chattambi Swamikal for living beings. Swamikal once voluntarily suffered the pain caused by the blow inflicted on a bull by a

1. Chattambi Swami Smaraka Grantham, PP. 159-68.

cart driver.[2] From the smallest ant to fierce tiger all were members of his empire of love and affection. Once Swamikal saved a cow from an attacking tiger by standing calmly in between them.[3] He loved animals so much that he used even to Pat cruel animals. A merciful heart naturally hates violence and endears non-violence. Only a person having Universal outlook (Samashti) can realise that his self is part of the Universal being. The love of Swamikal for living beings extended to non-moving objects also. Life as a matter of fact is present in non-moving objects also. Instances are there of climbers and creepers moving in accordance with the will of Swamikal. As directed by him the dogs in hundreds have remained cordial to each other though they are quarrelsome by nature. Rats and Cobras have withdrawn from their cruel and evil actions.[4] Swamikal considered the highest water mark of non-violence as salvation itself.[5] He convinced others of the greatness of the principle of non-violence by applying it in his own life. On many occasions he has demonstrated that all living beings may be influenced and won over through the practise of non-violence. Even the tiger and the serpent remained near Swamikal with implicit obedience. On one occasion Swamikal found a group of people ready to kill an infuriated cobra near the Kandiyoor temple (Mavelikkara). He restrained those people and took the Cobra with his hand. After walking for some time he found a place covered with small trees where the serpent was safely allowed to go. Some people who witnessed this even doubted that Swamikal had smeared his body with the juice of some shrub as a preventive to Cobra poison. Chattambi Swamikal cleared their doubt by saying that even cruel animals will embrace us if they are convinced that we really love

2. N. Balakrishnan Nair, Maharshi Chattambi Swamy Thiruvadigal (Malayalam) Trivandrum 1959, P. 4
3. Ibid; P. 7.
4. Ibid; P.11
5. Ibid; P. 13

them.[6] Swamikal expressed another universal truth when ants which were swept away covered one of his legs in a disciplined manner. After some time the ants as directed by Swamikal quietly left his leg, ate the powdered rice and left the place. To an inquisitive on-looker Swamikal said that the living beings must become convinced that we love them. They become one with us since the whole universe is linked by mind. There is no vaccuum between one mind and another.[7] The constraint of space does not permit to describe comprehensively the consideration Swamikal had for all living beings and the emphasis he laid on the universality of mind. He has analysed the concept of non-violence in the proper and practical perspective.

6. P. K. Parameswaran Nair and N. Gopinathan Nair, Parama Bhattaraka Sree Chattambi Swamikal (Trivandrum, 1987) PP. 66-67

7. Ibid; PP. 65-66.

## CHAPTER VII

# The Great Social Reformer

The implications and depth of Chattampi Swamikal's contribution to cultural advancement, moral elevation and social transformation can be understood only by examining the political, economic and social conditions which existed during his lifetime. The Indian Culture and civilisation met with degeneration and confrontation by aliens since the decline of the Empire of Harsha Vardhana. The Indian people and Rulers themselves were, to a certain extent, responsible for the loss of vitality of the Indian civilisation. The Migrants of the earlier period merged with the Indian population and accepted the religious practices and social customs of the land. The later waves of Migrants (some of whom were plunderers who returned home after collecting wealth) challenged the Indian values of life and refused to reconcile with the culture of the land. Everytime a foreign invasion took place the local population became divided into the supporters of aliens and their indigenous opponents. In the course of the centuries of common social life one section of the separatist group became reconciled to the Indian civilisation. The remaining section of foreigners was unable to identify itself with the main stream of Indian civilisation and claimed later the Indian society to be plural. In an austere sense of the term, however, plurality exists in every society.

The Monguls who came to India in waves of invading hordes gained population strength through conversion and multiplication and became capable of offering social confrontation to the rest of the population. Indian diversity meant disunity also. With the additional equipment of political control those who were at the helm of affairs made strenuous efforts to distort and misinterpret the traditional culture of India. As it proved to be risky to denigrate the faith of the people the British assured them through

the Queen's proclamation of 1858 that their faith will be respected. But, the method of proselytisation adopted became one of exploitation of the poverty and ignorance of the Indian masses. A planned and determined effort was made to divide Indians vertically on the basis of religion and horizontally on the basis of community. The western educated intelligentsia of India lost belief in Indian values and began to speak of Indian traditional culture and faith in derogatory terms. It was accompanied by admiration and adoption of everything western and material. The Indian Scriptures, really, contain the science of cosmos and are not mythical. The socio-religious reform movements led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayananda Saraswathy, Swami Vivekananda and others was the Indian response to the challenge of the anti-Indian forces to the civilisation of the sub-continent. A conspicuous representative of these movements in Kerala was Chattampi Swamikal who was later joined in his work of social reforms by Narayana Guru.

The people of Kerala came to be divided as the higher castes and lower castes in varying degrees. A social hierarchy based on such a division gradually took shape and was enforced. Treatises were either found out or newly written to substantiate in mythological terms the gradation of society. Vedic and other education were prohibited in varing degrees to the lower castes. Even in the practise of 'Pollution' the gradation of social groups was adopted. Expensive, unscientific and immoral social practices were enforced. The task which awaited the socio-religious reformers in Kerala was herculian. Chattampi Swamikal was the first reformer to raise the banner of revolt against the denial of educational facilities, practise of pollution and Christian proselytisation through false propaganda. The Christian educational institutions had economic and organisational purposes. But, the ulitmate purpose of establishing them was proselytisation through unfair means. By the use of his sharp intellect and forceful logic Chattampi Swamikal cracked the nut of Brahmanical superiority. Sree Narayana Guru was singularly responsible for preventing the lower

castes, particularly the Ezhavas, from gravitating towards Christianity. The 'Guru' convinced them that the social disability of the lower castes cannot be removed by leaving the Hindu faith. Chattambi Swamikal and Narayana Guru hoped that the co-operation of the Nayars and Ezhavas will pave the way for Hindu unity and strenuously worked to unite the two communities. Unfortunately, some leaders who expected to benefit from Nayar - Ezhava disunity created cleavage between them[1]. Such distance between the two communities gradually developed hostility between them. The Christian Missionaries used to speak with disdain and sarcasm about Hinduism. Hindu gods, temples and 'Sanyasins' were publicly candemned.

Chattampi Swamikal believed that sacrifices and rituals were not necessary if one had inquisitiveness and faith for attaining salvation. But, the 'Brahma Vidya' or the path to self-realisation, he believed, should be told only to those who possessed firmness of mind, faith in the 'Guru' and practised celebacy. Swamikal preached Brahma Vidya only to a selected few. First, it was preached to Sree Narayana Guru, then to Neelakanta Thirthapadar and finally to thirthapada Paramahamsar. The other disciples were given advice according to their standard of morality and need in social life. Swamikal was disinterested in having too many disciples and founding an organisation. He used to mix up with householders and addressed small home audiences. This method oppeared to him as more useful in wiping out social evils than addressing public meetings. He lived a simple life and pretended to be an ordinary person. Swamikal may be compared to an ice-

1. Mr. Parameswaran (a member of the Thoppil Veedu, Pettah, Thiruvananthapuram and an intimate friend of both Narayana Guru and Chattambi Swamikal) accuses Kumaran Asan and his followers for keeping the Ezhavas and the Nayars at a distance and moving a separate family partition bill for the former. They also referred to Narayana 'Guru' as 'Ezhava Muni' and 'our Swamikal'. (Sree Vidyadhiraja Viswakendram and Nayar Suhrit Sangham, Sree Vidyadhiraja Chattambi Swamikal (Malayalam, Trivandrum, 1995) P. 183

berg of which only a small portion is seen above the sea. Only a fraction of his knowledge and divinity was revealed to the outer world. He taught by example rather than by precept. The Hindus who had become lethargic in religious matters were apprised that life has a goal and purpose. The tenets of religion became overshadowed by wrong concepts and evil practices. The soc' tem of those days did not tolerate association of high caste people with those of low caste. Swamikal tried to unite all Hindus who were at that time divided into groups and were indulging in mutual rivalry. During his early life he was the first young man in the high caste Nayar Community to challenge the deplorable social system. He associated himself with young men of low castes, particularly the Ezhavas. In order to uplift the Ezhavas whom he loved whole heartedly Samikal taught Narayana Guru the rituals and formalities of worship, consecration, etc.[2] It was done on the belief that if the Ezhavas, the most advanced among the backward classes, is uplifted the benefit of that will naturally be gained by the others also since the benefit of rain cannot be confined to a few people. Swamikal declared that the first thing required for the uplifting of the downtrodden people was educating them. He demanded that those who had become educated among the downtrodden should strain their nerves to uplift their community.

By writing the book 'Prachina Malayalam' (Ancient Kerala) Chattambi Swamikal made the Nayar community to wake-up and realise that it was unnecessarily accepting Brahmin dominance and categorisation as 'Sudras'. Swamikal has established that the Nayar had not appropriated the land of the Brahmins and that they were owning land originally and points out the undue respect shown by the Nayars to the Brahmins. Besides considering

2. The fact that Chattambi Swamikal saw in Nanu Guru a suitable person to uplift the Ezhava Community and helped him with proper advice has been testified to by Nataraja guru and Karuva Krishnan Asan. (Dr. Nataraja Guru, The Word of the guru also Karuva Krishnan Asan, Sree Chattambi Swamikal (Malayalam) P. 394

it a mattar of prestige to give women in marriage (Sambandam) to Brahmins some of the Nayar families observed it as an inviolable rule that only Brahmins should marry the women of the family. Usually, no wealth is given by the Brahmin fathers to their children born of Nayar women. If something is incidentally given it is later given to other Brahmins out of the fear that the family will be ruined if the wealth of Brahmins is received.[3] Swamikal makes a dig at those who lavishly treat the Brahmins by giving them food, clothing, presents, etc. These Brahmins manage to make the Nayar chiefs conduct ritualistic performances for trivial reasons which is profitable to them. The access of the Nambudiris to Nayar houses is held as the genesis of mutual hostility in Nayar houses, loss of wealth and honour and the birth of evil minded children. The Nambudiri destroys the taravad as a thick forest is destroyed by fire. Yet, the family leaders guided by a sense of false prestige, frown at those sensible people who exhort them to end the alliance with Nambudiris. Swamikal compares such people so far as the family (Tarawad) is concerned to the planet Saturn coming to the place where the 'Moon' has been at the time of birth of a person. Swamikal scoffs at those who claim to be the children of Nambudiris and deem it creditable.[4] There are three channels of devotion - as Brahmins, as father and as destiny shapers. No other community has so much devotion and belief towards another community as the Malayala Nayars have for Malayala Brahmins. The impact of the work 'Prachina Malayalam' was soon felt on the Nayar community the members of which ceased to do menial work in Nambudiri houses. The 'Elayat' (a low caste Brahmin) who used to occupy honoured and indispensable position in the obseques performed by Nayars came to be rejected mostly by the latter community. The resilience of the Nayar community was sought to be overcome by arguments

3. Chattambi Swamikal, Prachina Malayalam Vol. I N. Neelakanta Pillai (pd), 1088 (Malayalam Era) P. 66

4. Ibid; P. 67

put forward in prominent news papers like 'Dwaja Rajan', 'Parasuraman', 'Bhagyodayam', 'Janmi', etc. But the arguments put forward by these publications could not cope with the withering logic with which Chattambi Swamikal established that the Nayars are not the 'Sudras' described in the Vedic texts. The liberation of the Nayars from humiliation by Brahmins signalled the beginning of a new social revolution in Kerala. It was followed by the liberation movements organised by the Ezhavas, Nadars, Pulayas, etc. The caste distinction among Hindus was so severe that the Brahmins and Kshatriyas considered it polluting to touch their own children born of Nayar women. Swamikal boldly stated that without destroying misleading sacred texts which preach untouchability social liberation is not possible for Nayars as well as the others.

Five years after writing 'Prachina Malayalam' Chattambi Swamikal worte 'Vedadhikara Niroopanam' and proved beyond doubt that all people without distinction of caste, creed and gender were entitled to learn the Vedas and perform worship. Examples have been quoted from the scriptures of Brahmins learning 'Brahma Vidya' from 'non-Brahmins'. The depth of knowledge and the logic of exposition found in the writing of Vedadhikara Niroopanam surpasses even the profoundness of the works of 'Badarayana' and 'Sree Sankaracharya'. One need not be astonished at this since Chattambi Swamikal made use of the same source of information which the authors of the scriptures depended upon. He had the scholarship and courage to declare that both men and women have the right to understand the Vedas while Vyasa who wrote the 'Brahma Sutra' and Sankaracharya who wrote a commentary on it were content to be subservient to popular social practices eventhough they had no scientific basis. Chattambi Swamikal pointed out that both 'Vyasa' and 'Sankara' distorted the meaning of the term 'Sudra'. The title of the book 'Christumatha Chchetanam' has been mis-construed as contradicting the principles of Christianity. 'Chchetanam' as given in

the preface of the work itself means 'breaking open'. Without opening a box its contents cannot be known. Swamikal really examined the tenets of Christianity and its contemporaneous application and found to his dismay wide divergence between the two. As he did not want the Christians to be misled he brought out the blatant discrepancies in Christian texts. As he believed in the universality of religion Swamikal wrote the 'Christumata saram' (essence of Christianity) also in order to reveal the simplicity and sanctity of the teachings of Christ. As one who had attained self-realisation Chattambi Swamikal could not discriminate between religions, between communities and also between mankind and the animal world. He preached kindness to all living things and exhorted his fellowmen not to do any harm to living things. His work 'Janthu-Karunya Niroopanam' reveals his concern for non-violence and the extent to which he applied that principle.

The quarrel between man and woman has always contributed to social tension. Chattambi Swamikal was not in the practice of delivering public lectures. He used to adopt conversational style while speaking to home audiences. Contrary to this practice he once gave a talk on the place of man and woman in worldly life.[5] Swamikal explained that life is created by 'Prakriti' with the presence of the Infinite (Brahman). The union of 'Brahman' and 'Prakriti' or 'Siva' and 'Sakti' has caused the sound 'Aa' which has an upper half and lower half. The upper half indicates masculine gender and the lower half feminine gender. When these two halves remain apart they do not have difference of gender or the power to create life. When these two halves, man and woman enter into union multiplication of life takes place, in their unity life subsists, in their separation life does not multiply and in their contradiction life becomes extinct. Importance will go to 'Brahman' since without his presence 'Prakriti' cannot create. Since

5. Chattambi Swami Smaraka Grantam, PP. 154-6.

'Prakriti' permits the presence of 'Brahman' and causes the creation, sustenance and destruction of life, primacy,in the eyes of the world can be given to 'Prakriti'. The endeavour of man is meant for the enjoyment of woman and her children. The production of wealth for the family is the duty of man while the woman has the duty and freedom to remain at home and rule it and even the whole world with her will power. Swamikal stated that it was wrong to say that woman does not deserve freedom. But, such freedom is not for altering the roles of man and woman in society. Swamikal emphasized that an ideal woman's home is a small world and she who causes all prosperity to the household is the sole empress of the world. There cannot be a clearer statement of the respective and just roles of man and woman in the household.

Chattambi Swamikal taught in such a manner that his tenets can be practised by any one leading a wordly life. He skilfully co-ordinated philosophical principles with the moral values in life. As he understood easily the nature of men he advised the people who approached him to do only those things which they were capable of. The ordinary people were advised to practise non-violence, discard non-vegetarian food, have devotion to god and maintain morality and purity of life. There was no art which was not mastered by Swamikal. In some part of central Kerala he happened to see a 'Kathakali' artist acting as if he was lying horizontally in the air. On that day itself Swamikal wore the dress of a hunter in the jungle and acted in that difficult posture of the body.[6] He was completely devoid of ego and did not consider anything as his own. From his youthhood he believed that man should not have any kind of surveillance. This belief became stronger in course of time and characterised the whole life of Swamikal. He sympathised with all those who were suffering from physical ailments and on many occasions cured their illness.

6. The scene is that of hunter (Kattalan) asking Damayanti (queen) to rest on his shoulders so that the attacking serpent can be killed.

Events and instances are numerous to prove the superhuman powers of Swamikal. A few such events may be mentioned here to indicate his depth of wisdom and the extent of celestical powers possessed by him. In 1893 Swamikal was walking along a road in Thiruvananthapuram at dusk. When a person riding a bullock cart beat up one of the bullocks Swamikal felt the pain. He could not be indentified since Swamikal was not wearing the robes of a hermit. This incident proves his concern for living beings and his ability to identify himself with both the animate and inanimate things in the world. On another occasion Swamikal stood between a cow and a tiger which was running after it. He was seen telling something to the tiger. Without killing the cow the tiger returned to the jungle. This incident took place in Northern Travancore at the Kodanathu forest area of Malayattoor. Even creepers obeyed him by twining his body and later going back to the tree. Swamikal amusingly used to take tens and hundreds of dogs with him. In his presence these quarrelsome animals refrained from doing so and obeyed him implicitely. He attended a feast once accompanied by dogs which were described by him as his disciples. The dogs sat before plantain leaves like human beings and conducted themselves with decorum during the feast.[7] Swamikal took pleasure in treating the ants, rats, serpents, etc. also in a similar manner and surprisingly all of them obeyed him. Once he called to his presence about eight rats of a house and told them that the one which had committed mischief on the previous day shall stand out. One of the rats stood out trembling and after taking one paddy grain each the rats quietly went away.[8] Swamikal proved that reptiles and other creatures would love us if we love them by lovingly calling a reptile which remained circling his stretched hand for some time.[9] Ants responded to his call and thousands of them covered his legs till they were asked to leave.

7. Chattambi Swami Smaraka Grantham, PP. 87-8

8. Ibid; PP 88-9

9. Ibid; P. 106

This occasion was used by Swamikal to explain that the whole Universe has only one mind and that between the mind of one being and another there is no vaccuum.[10] When Swamikal visited the house of Perunelli Krishnan Vaidyan ( a favourite of Swamikal) he found women peeling paddy by using specially made rods (ulakka) with great strain. He collected the rods of all of them and began to work with the many rods at the same time. Chattambi Swamikal made these demonstrations not for revealing his greatness but merely for the sake of amusement. Once Swamikal reached a house in central Kerala and desired to stay there for the night. He chose a deserted out-house to sleep despite the warning given by the owner of the house that the out-house will be visited by 'Brahma Rakshas' (the spirit of a deceased Brahmin). To the surprise of all Swamikal remained alive in the morning and informed the inmates of the house that the spirit will not again visit the house. In the two stanzas written by him Sree Narayana Guru addresses Chattambi Swamikal as a hermit who had mastered knowledge. The path chosen by Swamikal for attaining salvation is described as 'Suka Marga' or path leading to salvation without having to pass through the intermediary stages.[11]

Chattambi Swamikal adopted a simple but peculiar life style. He used to rest and sleep on cot weaved with rough coir thread. He used to turn his head to the left and right in order to activate the nerves known as 'Eda' and 'Pingala'. This was a practice adopted by Dravida Yogis to merge the mind in 'Chidakasam'. Chattambi Swamikal asked those who addressed him as 'Swami' as to how he deserved it. He was exceedingly humble in his behaviour and never desired that the others should know his greatness. He did not desire the fulness of his spiritual development to be revealed to any one and preferred to be known simply as 'Chattambi'. Swamikal demonstrated to the world by his own

10. Ibid; P. 107

11. Just like a bird reaches the top of a tree without having to climb up from the bottom slowly.

life as to how man can do his duty completely detached from good as well as bad actions. He never wore the yellow robes of a saint, shaved his head or carried with him other insignia of hermitage. He wore only a white Dhoti and a short upper cloth. Such a saint is called 'Athivarnashrami' (Philosophical anarchist) for whom yellow robes are superfluous. Swamikal who impressed even Swami Vivekananda used to talk with ordinary people only in 'Prakrit' Malayalam. No place was chosen by him to stay permanently. He did not require any special place for meditation or recitation of Mantras. Swamikal lived in the midst of wordly men and remained detached from wordly life. He gave direction to worldly life though he himself did not lead a worldly life. He not only moved freely with members of low castes but took food from their houses and developed intimacy with them. Thus Chattambi Swamikal sowed the seeds of hindu unity in Kerala. He intended to wipe out caste distinction through friendship and cordiality.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. A. Balakrishnan Nair is M. A. in History and Economics of the University of Kerala, M. A in Politics of the University of Banaras and Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science. He has retired as Professor and Head of the Department of Politics, University College, Thiruvananthapuram. As a distinguished Professor of Politics Dr. Nair has been associated with studies in Kerala Politics. His research publications like 'Parliamentary Control of the Administrative Function in India' and 'Facets of Indian Defence' have proved to be pioneering works. He has been contributing articles in books, presenting papers in Seminars and guiding research. Dr. Nair hails from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala State.